

CINDY SHEEHAN: MOTHER OF A MOVEMENT?

The Nation.

TIME
IS ON THEIR
SIDE
Eric Alterman

ARE YOU
EXPERIENCED?
Jackson Lears

GORE WARMS UP

JUNE 12, 2006

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WITH HIS
NEW FILM,
AL FINDS HIMSELF
by DAVID CORN



April brought downpours of mail on two subjects: "Can the Left Get Right With God?" (April 24), articles on religion by Dan Wakefield, Frances Kissling and Michael Lerner; and Philip Weiss's "My Name Is Rachel Corrie: Too Hot for New York" (April 3), about the cancellation, under pressure, of a play based on Corrie's journals. Below are some of your letters. —The Editors

HELLO, GOD. IT'S ME, THE LEFT

Reno, Nev.

■ Frances Kissling's "Looking for Salvation in All the Wrong Places" was a perfect antidote to the articles surrounding it. Dan Wakefield, in "Taking Back the Faith," is worried about "the religious right's theft of the meaning and the message of Christianity" and would apparently be happy to have more elected officials with "a progressive faith perspective." Michael Lerner, in "Bringing God Into It," has discovered that "the left's hostility to religion is one of the main reasons people who otherwise might be involved with progressive politics get turned off." Ergo, the left needs to embrace "a set of spiritual values with progressive content." Kissling, a practicing Catholic, rejects the view that "progressive God-talk is the best way to express moral values." For Kissling moral, including religious, values are "best protected by a deep ethical commitment to the secular state." "Legislators need to be asking what the people want and not what God wants." Amen.

GRANT LENEAX

Townsend, Tenn.

■ Week after week I search *The Nation* for some reflection of myself. I found it in Dan Wakefield's and Michael Lerner's words. That I am an evangelical Christian is the great conversation stopper of my life, which need not be so. I don't mind the protests, condescending though they often are, from "atheists," "secularists," etc., who in fact I count among my friends. The point is to keep the conversation going and not impoverish intellectual life by separating all public life from religion, which in fact spawned some of the greatest progressive movements our liberal democracy has ever witnessed.

JEREMY LLOYD

Pittsburgh

■ As a committed secular leftist, I agree with Michael Lerner that we on the left should not be embarrassed to "acknowledge and articulate" our values. I am quite happy to acknowledge that my political views are grounded in a belief in the moral equality and dignity of human beings. But I don't agree that I need to bring God into it—bringing God into it might even be dangerous. Secularism is based on rational standards that are by definition open to

criticism and revision in light of new situations or facts. Religion, on the other hand, rests on the unassailable authority of the word of God, an authority that, unlike secular authority, does not admit rational criticism. For this reason, notwithstanding prominent examples to the contrary, religion has mostly been and can be counted on to continue being a force of reaction, not of progress.

JAMSHEED SIYAR

New York City

■ I am a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, a devout religious conservative (I hold the Bible to be the literal word of God) and a devout political liberal. While I share many of the religious right's moral concerns, I reject, on biblical as well as constitutional grounds, efforts to force their convictions on society through civil law. The same Bible that says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" also declares, in the words of Christ Himself, "My kingdom is not of this world," a statement made to a Roman governor for whom theological abstractions meant nothing and political agendas meant everything. It forms, with other passages, a clear biblical basis for the separation of church and state.

KEVIN D. PAULSON

Jamaica Plain, Mass.

■ As a Jew who views himself as a secular, progressive humanist, I take issue with Michael Lerner's premise that "scientism" has become "the religion of secular consciousness." Lerner also suggests that secularists reject the concept that humans desire meaning and a purpose-driven life and that they wish to keep "all values out of the public sphere." These are not the secularists I know; they would embrace every tenet of the New Bottom Line enunciated by Lerner. But their affirmation of those principles arises not from religious doctrine but from an ethic that flows from a ground-level appreciation of the common needs and yearnings of human beings and a sense of awe at the mystery of the universe that isn't impelled to name it "God." The secular progressive humanists I know champion Lerner's values, including the "radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is," without adopting the elements of religion that separate us from our fellow inhabitants of this planet.

MICHAEL FELSEN

Chicago

■ Here in Chicago, community organizers are thrilled to enlist the local clergy; in many cases that organizer is the local clergy. Groups working on criminal justice reform or defending public housing include religious leaders and faith-based groups along with leftist organizations. (One of the nicest invocations I ever heard was by a Maoist asked to give the opening prayer at a public housing meeting.) Far-

left groups work closely with religious pacifists in the antiwar movement, and religious leaders speak at every rally. (Note that the Communist Party has established a religious caucus.) In fact, I'd conclude that the real, active, on-the-ground left consists of a quarter to a half, maybe more, religious people.

CURTIS BLACK

Arlington, Va.

■ Thank you for Dan Wakefield's challenging article. On Easter Sunday I said to my congregation, "The Jesus who came preaching good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberation to the oppressed...has been stolen by Christians who don't seem to care about public policies to help the poor, the imprisoned or the sick; who preach a hate-filled message to gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered persons; and who embrace a gospel of prosperity for the affluent but remain indifferent to the impoverished and indebted of the developing world. This Jesus has been stolen by those who call you a saint when you feed the hungry but a communist when you ask why people are hungry. This Jesus has been stolen by those who call you a good Christian when you pray for the safety of the troops in Iraq but un-American when you question the wisdom of the war. This Jesus has been stolen by those who call you pastor when you do a wedding for a man and a woman but a false prophet when you suggest extending the same rights to same-sex couples."

DAVID ENSIGN, pastor
Clarendon Presbyterian Church

Richmond, Ind.

■ "Taking Back the Faith" was a real encouragement to me, a 90-year-old retired Friends minister who thought the liberal wing of Christendom was dead. Thank you. EARL J. PRIGNITZ

Pompano Beach, Fla.

■ Dan Wakefield's article re-energized my decision to get to work while I still have time (I'll be 86 in July). I'm a lifetime activist (double blacklist—McCarthy's and, later, my own Jewish people's) with scars to prove it. There's much to do: Head off an incipient war (Iran this time) and a fascism that looks a lot like my experiences during the 1930s and '40s. The American people are awakening, as their livelihoods are stolen from them. Young people worry about their future. They yearn for direction. Dan Wakefield, Frances Kissling, Rabbi Lerner are among many leading the way.

JOSEPH EGER

PLAY CALLED ON ACCOUNT OF PAIN

■ "Too Hot for New York" is too hot for this household and, I think, for most Jewish households.

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EDITORIALS

Status Quo Gitmo

"We don't want to be the world's jailer," insists Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Really? The Bush Administration seems to be waking up to the realization that Guantánamo Bay shames the United States before the world. The President and the Secretary now portray themselves as hapless custodians caught between Al Qaeda operatives and a slowpoke Supreme Court. "I would like to close the camp and put the prisoners on trial," the President declared May 10. It's as if Bush, Rice and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had never promulgated, approved or defended Guantánamo's law-free zone over the past four years.

The clock seems to be running down on Guantánamo. Last year Amnesty International secretary general Irene Khan was widely derided for describing Gitmo as the gulag of our times, but now impatience emanates from the world's capitals and even from the confines of the prison itself. In London, Lord Goldsmith—attorney general for Bush's staunchest ally and no stranger to harsh antiterrorism legislation—adopts Khan's analysis, calling Gitmo a global symbol of injustice: "The existence of Guantánamo Bay remains unacceptable." In Geneva the UN Commission Against Torture calls on the United States to close Guantánamo and any other prisons whose secrecy and lawlessness facilitate waterboarding, short-shackling or other brutalities that place our nation in violation of the Convention Against Torture. (CIA nominee Michael Hayden refused to condemn waterboarding at his recent confirmation hearing.) And in Guantánamo itself recently, a wave of suicide attempts was followed by a skirmish between guards and prisoners who had improvised weapons from lighting fixtures and electric fans.

While the White House party line on Guantánamo shifts, the lies that justify it go on. Rice continues to maintain that Guantánamo is filled with dangerous war criminals and terrorists, whom

she characterizes as "people who have vowed to kill more Americans if released." But the ranks of those released so far suggest otherwise: juveniles, low-level militia volunteers and the clearly innocent, sold to the Americans in Afghanistan as members of Al Qaeda by unscrupulous bounty hunters. On May 20 a Kuwaiti criminal court acquitted five former Guantánamo prisoners—released by the United States into Kuwaiti custody—of charges that they had collected money for Osama bin Laden.

What's more, the key facilitator of Guantánamo, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, remains adamant. As *Salon* has reported, Rumsfeld has been far more involved with the abusive interrogation of detainees than was previously known. On February 18 he declared bluntly, "We shouldn't close Guantánamo." And even as Bush and Rice hint at ambivalence, Rumsfeld's Defense Department is finishing a \$30 million long-term detention center.

If Guantánamo has finally reached critical mass as a worldwide issue, it is because of two intertwined activist campaigns: courtroom litigation and social protest. It is hard to think of an issue since the waning of the civil rights movement that has brought together volunteer lawyers from white-shoe firms like Jenner & Block in Chicago and religious activists and radical witness-bearers like the members of Catholic Worker, who in December staged a pilgrimage to Cuba, to the camp's boundaries. Thanks to the lawyers, the Supreme Court is expected to rule within weeks in the *Hamdan* case on the constitutionality of Rumsfeld's military tribunals; thanks to the activists, look for protest and other actions nationwide on June 26, the UN's International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

The Administration's phony attempts to backpedal rhetorically while maintaining Status Quo Gitmo will make matters worse. The suicides, cell-block battles and degrading treatment of prisoners—along with the moral degradation of our own military—can only intensify if the camp remains open. When Rice throws her hands in the air and asks, in essence, What do you expect us to do? there is only one answer: Shut it down.

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Gore Warms Up

In the middle of the 2000 presidential campaign, Vice President Al Gore was worried. He was trailing George W. Bush in the polls, and he was looking to define his candidacy in a big way. His idea was to deliver a major speech on global warming. There was probably no other issue he knew as well and felt as deeply about. As a Harvard undergraduate he had studied with Roger Revelle, one of the first people in the world to monitor carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and to predict that the increasing human-produced emissions would lead to disruptive climate change. After being elected to Congress in 1976, Gore had held the first Congressional hearings on global warming. And in 1992 he had written *Earth in the Balance*, a passionate, fact-flooded bestseller that detailed the dangers of global warming. "We must make the rescue of the environment the central organizing principle for civilization," he proclaimed in that book. So a speech in which he would declare global warming the top priority of a Gore presidency would be in sync with his past and his soul. It would be highly authentic.

But his campaign consultants were not keen on turning global warming into the organizing principle of Gore's presidential bid. As political journalist Joe Klein points out in his recent book, *Politics Lost*, their advice to Gore was simple: Don't do it. Global warming did not poll as a top concern for voters, and anyone who cared about it was already with him.

Gore proceeded with the speech. But his staffers did nothing to highlight it, and the address barely registered. Gore's concern for this serious matter was deemed inconvenient by the people he'd hired to win him the election. What he cared about most was marginalized by his own campaign—and he didn't protest.

This episode is worth recalling as Gore throws himself into another campaign: to promote his new film, *An Inconvenient Truth*—a crisply directed documentary by Davis Guggenheim (who has directed episodes of *24* and *Alias*) that follows the self-described "recovering politician" as he travels the United States, and the world, presenting a slide show that vividly depicts the reality and perils of global warming. Just before Gore was to jet off to Cannes to screen the movie, he spoke with me and my first question was about that 2000 campaign incident. In the film, he notes that the good news is that because global warming is a human-induced crisis, it can be addressed by humans. But the humans who would have to do that are politicians. If Gore—with all his commitment to the issue—was not willing to campaign as a global warming warrior, how can he expect other politicians to take on this hard task?

Gore declined to rehash his 2000 decisions or to explain why it took losing an election (with an asterisk) to unleash the crusader in him. He only obliquely addressed the matter: "Here's the underlying reality.... America is still in what someone described as a Category 5 denial on the seriousness of the global warming crisis. Until the American people change their minds about this reality, then the politicians in both parties are going to find rough sledding when they propose the serious solutions that are needed." That is, an America in denial is a tough audience for a

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politician obsessed—healthily—with global warming. After the disappointing finale of the 2000 race, Gore said, he decided he “was going to do everything I could to change that underlying reality and to take this message to as many people as I could.” His mission, in a way, is to make the world safe for the politician that Gore might have wanted to be but was not. Hence, the traveling slide show—which he had first developed years earlier and which he says he’s presented about 1,000 times.

The show—and the film about the show—is engaging, as Gore displays charts, graphs, photos and video footage, mixing in wit and self-deprecating humor. One harrowing segment features computer simulations of New York, Beijing and other cities flooded by rising sea levels, caused by the melting of the polar ice caps. In the documentary Gore comes across as a master of the science, a committed and caring policy wonk, an engaging teacher and, yes, personable. He seems completely at home. It’s Al Gore at his best. (Everyone can use a good director.) And any Democratic voter who watches the movie will have the same reaction: Where was this Al Gore when we needed him? Why, I asked him, did the nation not experience that Gore in 2000? “When you are seen through the filter of a national political campaign,” he replied, “with your opponents offering caricatures every hour on the hour and a properly skeptical press corps”—he laughs a bit awkwardly—“assigning motives to every utterance and voters themselves saying, ‘Aha! I know why he’s saying that—he’s trying to get my vote,’ that is fundamentally different from the way it’s possible to see someone who is not in that context.”

Blaming the media is easy. But perhaps it’s too much to expect Gore to engage in self-flagellation when he is flogging a movie and riding a wave of positive publicity. In the movie he candidly refers to his decades-long efforts to turn global warming into a hot-button issue, remarking, “I feel as if I have failed to get this message across.” He’s doing what he can now. But when he looks at the Democratic Party leaders these days, he doesn’t find many compatriots. Congressional Democrats have proposed an energy-independence plan, but they’re hardly making planetary rescue a front-burner issue. (And Gore notes in the film that the window of opportunity for preventing climate catastrophe may close in a matter of years.) In fact, with an electoral strategy based partly on a backlash caused by rising gas prices, the Democrats are reinforcing the popular notion that Americans have a sacred right to cheap gas. Is Hillary Clinton, I asked, as committed as she should be? Gore didn’t take the bait, but he did say that the Democrats were not doing enough: “It gets back to that underlying reality. The country as a whole is not yet in a place where politicians feel comfortable.”

For all his doom and gloom in the film—it’s enough to give the most ardent enviro stomach pains—Gore told me he believes public opinion is near a tipping point. “Six months from now,” he said, “if we have this conversation, you and I will agree that the period between the spring and the beginning of winter was a period when the country changed dramatically on global warming.” What’s the reason for this green bullishness? His film? Gore ticked off the positive signs: Evangelical ministers have pronounced global warming a moral issue; corporate execs at General Electric, Du Pont and other companies have champi-

oned emissions-cutting measures as good for business; cities and towns have taken their own steps and called on the federal government to move; Mother Nature has kicked up more extreme weather (a true warning sign); and insurance companies around the world are beginning to worry. “Now, I have felt in times past that we were close to a tipping point, and I’ve been wrong,” Gore added. “I don’t think I am wrong this time.”

The Al Gore freed from electoral politics is far more appealing (see his recent *Saturday Night Live* appearance) and outspoken. In 2002 he fiercely criticized Bush for heading toward war in Iraq, and earlier this year he slammed the President for placing the Constitution in “grave danger” by insisting he had the inherent authority to eavesdrop on and imprison Americans without warrants. And Gore has renewed his career as an evangelist for ecological sanity without seeking attention for this work. (He didn’t approach the filmmakers—they came to him—and initially he was skeptical about the project.) As the documentary shows, he performs his new role with a panache and dedication that candidate Gore never conveyed. The good reviews have prompted speculation about another Gore presidential bid (despite a recent poll that shows his positive rating at a low 28 percent).

“I have no intention of being a candidate,” he said before catching that flight to Cannes. He sounds as if he might mean it. But let’s put the question slightly differently: Does he believe that a politician who showed a slide show like his would have a chance as a presidential candidate? “The role of global warming in American politics,” he answered, “will change when the minds of the American people change about the urgency of the issue. And that is why I made this movie—to change the minds of the American people.” That’s a tall order—perhaps taller than winning the White House—but one that seems to come more naturally to him than campaigning.

“I have become very impatient,” Gore wrote in *Earth in the Balance*, “with my own tendency to put a finger to the political winds and proceed cautiously.” But now he has no consultants telling him what to do to win an election. He is simply trying to save the world—literally—by following his own instincts. The pity is, he’s probably right that this is a job for a former politician, not a current one.

DAVID CORN

Why Mine Deaths Are Up

The May 20 mine disaster, which killed five coal miners, occurred in Harlan County, Kentucky—infamous for its history of conflict between mine operators and miners. In the 1930s violent strikebusting by Harlan County coal companies against the fledgling United Mine Workers inspired Florence Reese’s union anthem, “Which Side Are You On?”

The Bush Administration has made it clear which side it is on. Mine workers have faced increasingly unsafe conditions because of rollbacks of health and safety regulations, the appointment of former mining industry executives to federal mine safety agencies and the slashing of the budget and staff for safety inspection.

The Administration has opposed legislation supported by the United Mine Workers and Democrats in Congress that would

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require stronger standards on oxygen availability for mine emergencies, mine rescue teams, communications and tracking devices; require immediate notification of accidents and rapid emergency response; set mandatory minimum penalties for egregious and repeated violations; and prohibit the use of dangerous conveyor belts to ventilate work areas.

The cozy relationship between the Administration and the coal industry is sweetened with campaign dollars. Since 2000 the coal mining industry has contributed \$10.7 million to federal campaigns, 88 percent to Republicans, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

In reporting on the Harlan County toll, the mainstream media ignored the Administration's complicity in this and other mine disasters. A number of papers reported that the Harlan County deaths brought to thirty-one the number of miners killed so far this year—including the twelve killed in the Sago disaster in West Virginia in January (see Erik Reece, "Who Killed the Miners?" February 27)—compared with twenty-two in all of 2005. But only one major daily—the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and in only one sentence—connected this trend to Administration actions.

The Administration's ties with the mining industry are catalogued in a report issued in January by Democratic Representative

George Miller, the leading mine-safety advocate in Congress. According to the report, the Administration has brought in mining industry insiders to stack the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), which oversees the nation's coal mines, and the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission (FMSHRC), which settles disputes involving the Federal Mine Act.

Bush's appointees to top MSHA positions have included David Lauriski (former executive at Energy West Mining), John Caylor (executive with three companies, including Cyprus Minerals), John Correll (Amax Mining and Peabody Coal), Mark Ellis (former legal counsel for the American Mining Congress) and Melinda Pon (executive at BHP Minerals). Lauriski was forced to resign in 2004 after CBS's *60 Minutes* reported that under his direction the agency had improperly awarded no-bid, single-source contracts to companies with ties to him and one of his assistants.

Last September Bush nominated Richard Stickler, a former executive at a West Virginia subsidiary of Massey Energy (which has one of the worst safety records in the industry) to run MSHA. At a Senate confirmation hearing in January, Stickler said he believes the nation's mine safety laws are adequate. West Virginia Democrat Robert Byrd has been keeping the Senate from voting on the nomination.

Similarly, Bush appointed Michael Duffy, former deputy general counsel for the National Mining Association, as FMSHRC chair and named two other industry executives—Stanley Suboleski (an executive with Massey Energy) and Michael Young (director of regulatory affairs for the Pennsylvania Coal Association)—to the five-member board.

Since taking office, according to the Miller report, Bush has proposed cuts (in real terms) in the MSHA budget each year. Between 2001 and 2005 the MSHA staff was reduced from 2,357 to 2,187, with the bulk of the cuts occurring in coal mine safety enforcement staff. The Administration has also dramatically reduced the number and size of fines, as well as the number of criminal prosecutions and convictions, compared with the Clinton era. Bush's appointees have weakened regulations requiring ventilation in coal mines, proposed rules that would allow mine operators to increase coal dust in the mines and delayed implementation of a Clinton-era rule improving air quality standards.

Moreover, in response to industry complaints, the Administration has demoted and transferred MSHA staff who have aggressively sought to enforce safety rules and blown the whistle on policies that jeopardize mine safety. In one example of blatant pro-industry bias, the Administration interfered with MSHA investigations of a coal sludge spill at a mine owned by a Massey Energy subsidiary that dumped 300 million gallons of toxic waste into Kentucky and West Virginia waterways.

Four days before the Harlan County mine tragedy, miners who had survived accidents, families of miners killed in accidents and union members held a rally on Capitol Hill to demand Congressional action on mine safety. United Mine Workers president Cecil Roberts said: "The time for talking about improving safety in the coal mines is over. Congress must act, and act now. America's coal miners and their families cannot wait."

PETER DREIER

CALVIN TRILLIN

ON JOHN MCCAIN'S WILLINGNESS TO SPEAK AT JERRY FALWELL'S UNIVERSITY

McCain was his own man, that's what was
thought—

A man who spoke his mind, a man who'd fought
A war and suffered mightily, in fact,
But toughed it out. His honor was intact.
On certain issues, he would hold his ground
No matter where the party line was found.
This man seemed strong and fiercely independent,
And that's what caused his star to be ascendant.
As was his way, McCain displayed no fears
Replying to those Carolina smears.
"An agent of intolerance" was what
He labeled Falwell, Karl Rove's favorite nut.
But now, discerning where his future lies,
He kowtows to this nut he must despise.
Yes, presidential fever's got him now.
To old McCain, alas, we must say *ciao*.
That independent man is gone for good.
What torture couldn't do ambition could.

Peter Dreier teaches politics and public policy at Occidental College.

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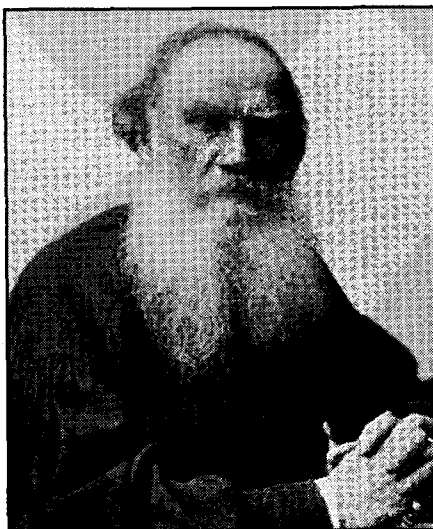
Dr. Irwin Weil is a Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at Northwestern University. He earned his B.A. and M.A. at the University of Chicago and his Ph.D. at Harvard University. He is the recipient of the Northwestern University College of Arts and Sciences Award for distinguished teaching and the Gold Pushkin Medal from the International Association of Teachers of Russian and Russian Literature.

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Drug War Flunks Out

Kraig Selken is a model student. A history major at Northern State University in South Dakota, Selken has maintained a GPA above 3.0 and was looking forward to a career as a teacher after his graduation in June 2007. But last October his hopes became a casualty of the “war on drugs” after he pled guilty to a misdemeanor for possessing a small amount of marijuana. Thanks to a provision of the Higher Education Act (HEA), Selken was automatically made ineligible for the financial aid he needs to pay for college and will not be able to complete his last year unless he finds some other way to cover the cost.

On March 22 Selken joined Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), a national organization committed to drug-law reform, and two other student plaintiffs in a federal class-action lawsuit, brought with the assistance of the ACLU’s Drug Law Reform Project. The suit charges that the HEA drug provision violates the due process and the double jeopardy clauses of the Fifth Amendment. By singling out drug offenders for punishment and stripping them of educational assistance on top of their criminal penalties, the lawsuit claims, the government is trampling on students’ constitutional rights. “I want to complete my education and help end an unconstitutional and nonsensical policy,” says Selken, “both for my own benefit and for the thousands of other students impacted by the provision.”

SSDP says that according to government figures, more than 180,000 people have been temporarily or permanently denied financial aid since the HEA provision went into effect in 2000. Drug crimes are the sole offense for which students lose eligibility. Murderers, rapists and child molesters are all eligible. Marisa Garcia is not. Ticketed for possessing a pipe containing marijuana residue just before the start of her freshman year at California State University, Fullerton, Garcia was stripped of her financial aid. Like Garcia, the vast majority of drug offenders are convicted of possessing a small amount of marijuana, and advocates believe this is also true of those denied financial aid by the HEA provision.

Since those who don’t require financial aid are unaffected, and since those most in need of financial aid have fewer resources to mount an effective defense against criminal charges, the provision clearly discriminates against lower-income students—a rather ironic inequity, given that the intent of the HEA when it was passed in 1965 was to open higher education to those with lower incomes. During the HEA’s 1998 reauthorization, however, drug warrior Representative Mark Souder added the drug provision in committee; it mandated denial of financial aid for at least a year and up to a permanent ban, depending on the severity of the offense.

In 2000 the Education Department moved to enforce the provision by adding the question “Have you ever been convicted of possessing or selling illegal drugs?” to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In the face of mounting opposition, Souder soon claimed that the Education Department had misconstrued the law’s original intent. As an evangelical Christian who believes in forgiveness, he declared that the law should apply only to convictions received while in college, not to ear-

lier convictions. As part of the 2005 HEA reauthorization, the provision was modified accordingly. Unfortunately, the reform actually helps very few people, since the vast majority of college students start their university career around the age of 18 and juvenile offenses are not considered to be past convictions anyway. Frustrated by the flawed legislation, SSDP and its fellow student plaintiffs decided to move ahead with their class-action lawsuit against the Education Department.

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings was “not available” to comment on the lawsuit or any of its claims. Her department has been equally forthcoming in making information about who is affected by the HEA provision available to the public. Responding to inquiries from legislators and the media, SSDP filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the department in December 2004 for a state-by-state breakdown of students who answered the FAFSA drug question the “wrong” way. After months of sometimes farcical bureaucratic stonewalling, SSDP was presented with a bill of more than \$4,000 to conduct what should have been a simple database search—a mark-up on product worthy of the Cali cartel and one far beyond the means of a struggling nonprofit. Though its FOIA request was intended to reveal the activity of government and served no commercial purpose, the student group was denied a fee waiver. “As SSDP’s campaign could directly benefit those who would profit from the deregulation or legalization of drugs,” a department official explained in his final rejection letter, “I cannot conclude...that SSDP has no commercial interest in the disclosure sought.”

“I guess the suggestion is that if people know how many students in every state are affected by the HEA provision, the drug war will end,” says SSDP campaigns director Tom Angell, whose organization filed a separate federal lawsuit against the Education Department with the aid of Public Citizen to secure a fee waiver for its FOIA request. In response to the lawsuit, the department finally relented, agreeing in late March to waive the fee and provide the data by the end of the month. After handing over incomplete spreadsheets on March 31, the government finally sent the full data on April 12. Should the drug war end as a result, SSDP promises to donate any ensuing profits to repairing the damage caused by decades of foolish drug-control policies.

HASDAI WESTBROOK

Hasdai Westbrook is a contributing editor at The Brooklynite and a former editor of New Voices magazine. His writing has appeared in The American Prospect and the Washington Post.

ON THE WEB: As centrist Democrats unite around an Iraq withdrawal strategy, Tom Hayden analyzes the implications for the peace movement. John Nichols examines the pro-Bush, pro-Wall Street record of the Democratic Congressman who is under investigation for bribe-taking and argues that “if ever there was a member of Congress who merited abandonment by his party, official censure and a hasty exit from the legislative branch, it is William Jefferson.” Ari Melman explores how political campaigns are harnessing MySpace.com and other online social networking tools (www.thenation.com).

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Felonious Intent

Eight-year-old Amber Sadiq was killed in Brooklyn a few days ago, when an empty school bus rolled through an intersection and pinned her to a street lamp. The bus was unattended while the driver went to lunch, leaving the doors unlocked. An 8-year-old boy had boarded the bus and released the emergency brake. He jumped off again when it started rolling. "He wanted to drive the bus," according to a police detective. "The bus started to move. He got scared. He saw a crossing guard jumping up and down. The bus stopped after hitting a pole." City medical examiners ruled Amber's death an accident. According to the *New York Times*, "Industry experts said buses are intended to be driven to and from their yards, not parked on city streets." Furthermore, the *Times* reports, "to avoid stress on transmission systems, many buses must be left in neutral."

Nevertheless, the boy has been taken into custody by the Department of Juvenile Justice and charged with negligent homicide. A judge has ordered a psychiatric evaluation. "The conduct he engaged in constitutes the basis of a criminal act," declared the prosecutor.

I generally don't comment on cases before all the evidence has been presented in a trial, but if there was ever a time to make an exception, this would seem to be it. Indeed, Amber's father has decried the charge, saying "he is a baby himself," and that "the question is why the vehicle was not more secure." It will be interesting to see whether this case really proceeds much further in the courts—the prosecution has discretion to dismiss. One must hope they will reconsider, given a day or two of deep breathing.

That said, I remain troubled by the way this case has played out in the media. The boy's full name was published in no less than the *Times*. True to form, the *New York Post* spun the story for its potential as a Victorian epic. Amber was not just a tragic victim whose bright light was extinguished by the cruelest of circumstances; she was made a foil for the boy's depicted worthlessness. Although the two children lived within a block of each other, their "lives were clearly on divergent paths." She was "eager" and "popular," an A student who had "ambitions," an unfulfilled destiny to "follow her brainy older sister into elite Stuyvesant HS."

In contrast, the boy's record of chronic absence (forty times in a year) and tardiness (fifteen) was enumerated in great detail, as though truancy were the inevitable predictor of the homicidally inclined. REPEAT OFFENDER, screamed the headline in the *Post*—"repeat," because he'd been suspended from school for having tried to board a parked school bus once before. "Wild Boy," began the subtitle of the story. "Restless prankster." "Troubled boy."

It is true that the frequency of the boy's truancy had led his school to report his family to the Administration for Children's Services at some point; but that agency (not without its own biblical epics of oversight) apparently had found no grounds for

action—which in any event would be a civil matter. Moreover, if one were pressed to assign fault in this accident, guardianship (of both the bus and the boy) should be implicated—rather than the intentionality of such a very young minor.

I do wonder what it says about us as a society that an 8-year-old would be criminally charged in such a case. There's a kind of blind, fill-in-the-blank application of the law that we should find troubling. Criminal homicide is a felony and carries a potential eighteen-month sentence for this child.

According to the New York Consolidated Penal Law: S 125.10, "A person is guilty of criminally negligent homicide when, with criminal negligence, he causes the death of another person." It is important to understand that in criminal as well as civil law, causation must be "direct" and "proximate." Negligence, moreover, is generally defined as "gross deviation from the standard of care that a reasonable person would observe in the actor's situation."

David Feige, the former trial chief of the Bronx defender, has just published a book titled *Indefensible*, in which he examines the way media narratives are increasingly driving how prosecutors, lawyers and judges administer justice. "Deviation from a standard of care?" he said when I asked him about Amber Sadiq's case. "What is reasonable prudence for an 8-year-old? The entire character of an 8-year-old is one of carelessness. He's a kid! There has to be some distinction between a child and an adult." To Feige, "the worst part is that he's been taken away from his home and held as a criminal. This is a classic judicial response in a high-profile case. Do they seriously think he's going to flee? If Amber's parents understand what's going on, it's hard to understand why the criminal justice system does not."

There is no doubt that this case is a tragedy and a trauma for all concerned. But we should also examine the mythic or cultural scripts that seem to be driving our sense of public resolution. A rather meanspirited subtext permeates not just the print media but television, cable and the blogosphere: on the one hand, the construction of a class of perpetrators who are Born Bad, who are conceptually and thus literally indefensible, who must be taken into custody and confined as young and as quickly as possible. On the other hand, a class of victims who are innocent angels in that doomed way that fetuses and Terri Schiavo have too often been depicted: innocence as already ruined, passive, dead, an endless inspiration for retribution, a vessel for vengeance. Iconic Good played against The Evil Seed, breathless screeds imbued with that odd mixture of hatred and delight that so animates anything Fox TV touches.

It was precisely this sort of inflammatory, unkind, "wild child" hysteria that swept the minor boys in the Central Park jogger case into prison—only to be fully, if much too quietly, exonerated years later. There is a reason we are supposed to pursue issues rather than images in courts of law; pursue proof rather than apocalypse. ■

ERIC ALTERMAN

Time Is on Their Side

In recent years, *Time*, America's largest-circulation newsweekly, winner of the 2006 National Magazine Award for General Excellence, and undoubtedly the nation's most influential magazine, has morphed into a kind of glossy sibling to the *Wall Street Journal*. Like the *Journal*, its hard news pages remain home to generally reliable, often excellent (though sometimes frivolous) political reporting. But its opinion pages are filled with vitriol, anger and abuse, almost always directed at liberals.

During much of the 1980s and early '90s, *Time* had a relatively balanced set of political contributors, boasting pundits Michael Kinsley and Barbara Ehrenreich in its back pages, Margaret Carlson with a chatty reported column inside and Roger Rosenblatt all over the place. But all are gone today; in addition to the fire-breathing neocon columnist Charles Krauthammer on the back page, there's Andrew Sullivan and Joe Klein. Of course, Sullivan is famously gay and has soured in his devotion to George W. Bush, and Klein frequently praises the centrist Democratic Leadership Council. But both writers share with Krauthammer a desire to paint liberals—and most Democrats—as either crazy or treasonous, and often both.

One could easily fill this magazine with examples of these writers' vicious comments about almost anyone they associate with the left. Sullivan notoriously suggested that Gore voters could not be trusted to be loyal Americans after 9/11; when Al Gore tried to expose the Bush Administration's lies about Iraq and save this country from catastrophe, Klein said "he looked like a madman" while Krauthammer, who parroted the same lies, joked that the ex-VP had "gone off his lithium."

Time's chosen columnists are not only abusive to liberals and Democrats; they are obsessive about their abusiveness. I was present recently when Klein shouted from the back of a room that "the message of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party is that they hate America."* Klein returns to no topic so frequently as those "harsh and stupid" Democrats who "make fools of themselves even when they speak the truth." Sullivan, for his part, recently took the occasion of the death of John Kenneth Galbraith to opine that "the only response to a person like that is sadness mixed with contempt." Krauthammer, meanwhile, describes Democrats as "rank hypocrites" with "nothing to offer on Social Security...nothing to offer on the war in Iraq...nothing to offer on the idea of how to manage ourselves in the UN...obstructionist." Moreover, "they have trashed two centuries of tradition." All three regularly accuse liberals of rooting for the enemy in Iraq, always without evidence (for a more extensive sample of *Time* columnists' comments in the magazine and elsewhere, see Media Matters: <http://mediamatters.org/items/200604120012>).

Recently, *Time* added to its stable Caitlin Flanagan, who debuted with an unsourced attack on Democrats for family hating. They also added Ana Marie Cox, a putative liberal whose specialty on her blog, Wonkette, were posts about—sorry, Mom—"ass-fucking," as if to prove the conservatives' point about liberal



perversity. (Were Kinsley, Garry Wills, Molly Ivins, E.J. Dionne, Bill Moyers, Josh Marshall, Arianna Huffington, etc. all unavailable?)

Time's lineup of columnists betrays its readers and distorts the public discourse in a Limbaugh-like direction. It also proves a larger point: That America's most influential magazine can carry this imbalance so long without anyone paying attention—and can win the industry's most coveted award while doing so—ought to put to rest any arguments that the media elite are part of some

liberal conspiracy. Indeed, media *machers* have grown so accustomed to conservative domination, they no longer notice it.

Still, *Time's* unfair and unbalanced pundit lineup is not necessarily a conservative conspiracy. Yes, it published a disgraceful whitewash of Ann Coulter on the cover last year, but otherwise the magazine's news reporting has not skewed noticeably rightward. *Time's* last three managing editors—Walter Isaacson, Jim Kelly and now Rick Stengel—have all been nonideological moderates. What's more, before he turned to Stengel late in the process of replacing Kelly, *Time* Inc. editor in chief John Huey reportedly offered the job to Kinsley, by acclamation the sharpest liberal pundit on the planet. (Tina Brown, another unapologetic liberal, was also said to be in the running.)

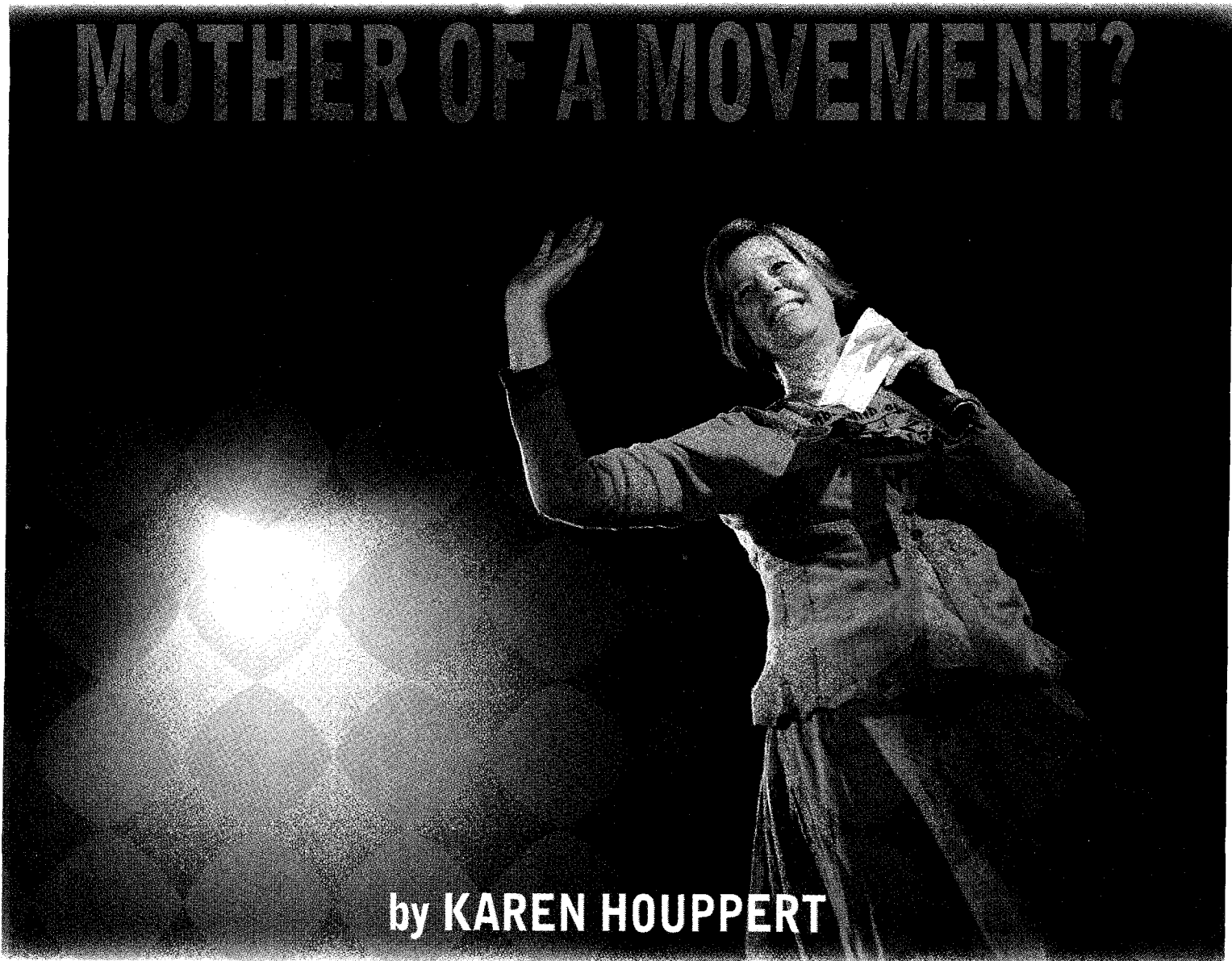
As he takes the reins, Stengel, who served as chief speechwriter for Bill Bradley's presidential campaign and co-wrote Nelson Mandela's autobiography, is undoubtedly concerned more with economic pressures than with liberal dissatisfaction. Approximately 650 staffers have received pink slips in the past six months, including Donald Barlett and James Steele, whose investigative reporting set an industry standard for intelligent and tenacious public-service journalism. *Time's* model is under siege, and its top brass are suffering extreme anxiety about how to rescue it. (Joe Klein's whining about "frothing bloggers" whose "vitriol...seems uninformed, malicious and disproportionate" can be seen as manifesting a status anxiety diagnosed decades ago in Joe McCarthy's followers and now afflicting certain mainstream pundits.)

The problem is real, but "frothing" about the evil that lurks in bloggers' hearts is not the response. Better pundits are. At the same ceremony that recognized *Time's* excellence, the award for commentary went to *The New Yorker's* elegant essayist Hendrik Hertzberg, whom the judges credited with making "sense of bewildering and often unnerving topics, with insight, fair-mindedness and authority." Huey and Stengel would do well to study those columns and begin offering their readers something similar. Better yet, how about replacing the repetitive antiliberal rants of Klein, Sullivan and Krauthammer in the magazine with a truly fair-and-balanced assortment of political opinion? ■

* Klein claims he said "leftist," not "liberal," and insists he was referring to Michael Moore and certain Nation writers. My memory disputes this, but regardless, the discussion topic was Democratic presidential candidates, not magazine writers and political documentarians.

ARTICLES

CINDY SHEEHAN: MOTHER OF A MOVEMENT?



by KAREN HOUPPERT

On the side of a hot, dusty road in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, peace activist Cindy Sheehan, 48, sits on the tailgate of an SUV with her sister, Dede Miller, 47. Although it is not yet 10 AM, a relentless sun beats down and the two women pass a tube of sunscreen back and forth, slathering up for the day of protest marching in front of them.

Dede, who quit her job of twenty-seven years as a human resources manager at a California K-Mart to head Sheehan's fledgling antiwar group, Gold Star Families for Peace, and to help manage her more famous sister's schedule, pushes dark curly hair off her already red and sweaty face. She wordlessly hands Cindy a baseball cap, which her sister promptly puts on.

The women sit in companionable silence, waiting to hook up

with a parade of 100 antiwar marchers—and hurricane survivors—traveling from Mobile, Alabama, to New Orleans. Tired from air travel the day before, they sip from water bottles, squint against the glare as they peer down the road for signs of marchers, check their watches and wait. They are on autopilot; they have been around the block on this one before.

Soon, along with dozens of antiwar activists who will swarm Sheehan with requests for her to autograph their T-shirts, to pose for photos with their arms across her shoulders, to listen to their stories, she will be approached by CNN, a local reporter, the BBC, Al Jazeera, *The Nation*.

Over the next three hours, she will sign each T-shirt, pose for each photo, listen to each story and agree to every interview.

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WHO OWNS WATER?

By MADDY BARLOW
and TONY CLARKE

WITH
FIGHTING
THE PROTECTIONS
of the World

Cindy Sheehan is, of course, the grief-stricken mother of a soldier killed in Iraq, who garnered so much attention when she camped outside George W. Bush's Crawford, Texas, ranch for three weeks last August. At the time Sheehan told the world that she wasn't leaving until President Bush had the courtesy to come and explain why her 24-year-old son, Army Spec. Casey Sheehan, had to die in this unnecessary war.

Bush declined to chat.

The media did not.

Reporters descended in droves to speak with this woman who had the audacity to mourn so publicly on Bush's doorstep. Suddenly, Sheehan's exhausted, sunburned face flashed across TV screens and into nearly every living room in the country—and around the world.

In the months since, Cindy Sheehan has emerged as the symbol of the antiwar movement, drawing crowds of well-wishers, counterprotesters and a slew of media to each of her many appearances across the nation and abroad. She is credited with galvanizing a nation whose approval rating of the President on Iraq was slipping to a dangerous 40 percent and injecting life into a sluggish peace movement. Sheehan's "fifteen minutes of fame" have stretched out to nearly fifteen months. She has rocketed from the obscurity of a low-key suburban California life where she did administrative work for the county—and before that worked for nine years as a youth minister at the local Catholic church—to Diane Sawyer's couch, Chris Matthews's hot seat and just about every national news program in between. Though she says she has always been politically left of center and admits that she opposed the Iraq War from the beginning, she was not an activist and had never spoken publicly against the war until July 4, 2004, three months after her son's death, when she addressed an antiwar crowd at a local church.

Today, she is more famous than anyone in a peace movement that lies poised on the brink of change: Public opinion has swung against the war—thanks in equal parts to antiwar activists and to Bush's own hubris and blunders—but this shift in Americans' thinking has yet to translate into significant changes in policy or leadership. At this critical juncture, all eyes are trained on Sheehan.

When people grouse about her—on the right and on the left—they usually begin by wishing she had quietly disappeared after her fifteen minutes of fame in Crawford. Columnist Jennifer Hunter's February 2006 commentary in the *Chicago Sun-Times* is typical: "I have become mightily disillusioned with Ms. Sheehan. Her whole anti-war shtick—which I heartily supported in the beginning—is becoming a lesson on how one initially well-intentioned woman, given a microphone and some airtime, can become immune to good sense."

But Sheehan persists, declining to go quietly into that good night. Indeed, she has amped up her volume. She considered a symbolic run for Senator Dianne Feinstein's California seat this

year, decided that running for office would dilute her antiwar message and withdrew; was arrested in January at Bush's State of the Union address for wearing a T-shirt with the slogan 2245 DEAD. HOW MANY MORE?; was arrested again in March at a UN protest in New York City; and has spoken at hundreds of colleges, marches and events around the world—even joining Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez on his weekly TV program.

While it is clear that Cindy Sheehan rises and falls on the strength of the peace movement, in a peculiar inversion of logic, pundits and organizers often mistake her symbolic role for a leadership role: In other words, as Sheehan goes, so goes the antiwar movement, which lends her every utterance enormous—some would say disproportionate—weight.

"A personality is easier to parse than a movement," says Bill Dobbs, formerly spokesperson for the antiwar coalition United for Peace and Justice. "So the scrutiny of Cindy has been intense."

Indeed, over the last year, Sheehan has been lambasted for a host of infractions, ranging from charges that she has politicized her grief to rebukes for naïvely weighing in on foreign policy decisions best left in the hands of the big boys in Washington.

Some of the criticism is predictable. She speaks as a mother, and her mothering comes under fire. There are the scoldings she gets—typically from other women—for protesting the war instead of staying home to cook her family dinner. A tiresome charge dredged up for decades against any woman who takes to the streets for a political cause, it is particularly spurious here: Sheehan's three remaining "children" have left the nest for college or the workforce. (Sheehan herself argues that she *is* taking care of her children—and yours—by trying to make sure they don't die in needless wars: "Because it's always young people who are killed in old men's wars," she says. "And I'm going to work for peace for the rest of my life. That is my vocation. This is my life.")

Other charges run the gamut. She is condemned for "exploiting death" (Rush Limbaugh); for being exploited herself at Camp Casey (Christopher Hitchens: "as well as being an hysterical paranoid ideologist, or at least being manipulated by people who are, who turned this into Camp Fruitbat and Nutbag"); for being deranged by grief (Michael Barone, *U.S. News & World Report*: During World War II "she would have just been thought to have been a person who was the victim of a personal tragedy and who had gone over the bend as a result of it. And they would have mercifully given her no publicity"); for being co-opted and manipulated by radical lefties (Mark Steyn, *Chicago Sun-Times*: "She's a woman whose grief curdled into a narcissistic rage, and most Americans will not follow where she's gone—to the wilder shores of anti-Bush, anti-war, anti-Iraq, anti-Afghanistan, anti-Israel, anti-American paranoia"); and for speaking beyond her place as a mother (Meghan Gibbons, *Washington Post*: "Preserving the purity of the average mother's voice has always been essential to motherhood groups. The most influential have coached mothers not to pontificate on subjects beyond their expertise").

Still, the only rebuke that seems to rankle Sheehan is the

Sheehan is more famous than anyone in a peace movement that lies poised on the brink of change, as opinion swings against the war.

Karen Houppert, a freelance reporter, is the author of *Home Fires Burning* (Ballantine), a book about the impact of military deployments on families.

charge leveled at her by counterprotesters that her son Casey must be turning over in his grave to hear his mother condemn the war, and by extension his military service.

But some see this as her greatest asset. "Cindy Sheehan's appeal lies in the fact that she embodies a different narrative about how to cope with the death of soldiers," says antiwar movement veteran Tom Hayden. "The traditional narrative is that the war must go on because the nation's dead demand it from the grave." This mandate of the dead, that they shall not have died in vain, becomes a powerful argument against ending a war, says Hayden. "What Cindy and other military families have provided—and only they can provide—is an alternative narrative such that the death of their sons becomes a mandate to stop the killing. They are speaking on behalf of the dead in a new way, insisting that the dead will have died in vain if Bush exploits their death in order to kill more young men and women. And for that reason, she's an embodiment of something very, very significant."

The authenticity of her message resonates because she is ordinary—and thus unthreatening. "As a mother myself, the first time I heard Cindy speak I was in tears," says Karen Dolan, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. "She was so poignant and touching that I was sure the average American, regardless of their political views, couldn't help but be moved by this mother who lost her son in Iraq." That said, Dolan thinks Sheehan risks losing credibility when she goes beyond that, as when she considered running against Feinstein. "In the end, she wisely decided against that," says Dolan. "I know she is well versed in many other issues, but I think the reason she connects with the public is that she is the mother of a son killed in Iraq. If she strays from that, she dilutes her message."

Indeed, part of Sheehan's power as a voice of the peace movement comes from her very lack of power as a mother. Unlike Jane Fonda, who spoke out against the Vietnam War from her privileged perch in Hollywood, Sheehan emerged as a middle-aged, middle-class Everymom who was simply raising her voice in the time-honored exception to maternal decorum: a shout to defend her kid. In fact, the rich tradition of "Don't mess with my boy!" extends across time and place from the mundane schoolyard scrap to the 1915 Women's International League to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who demonstrated for their "disappeared" sons every Thursday for years in Buenos Aires, to the contemporary Union of Soldiers' Mothers in Russia, where hordes of women are protesting their sons' conscription.

"Women as mothers can claim a kind of legitimacy that government officials never have," says Clark University Professor Cynthia Enloe, author of *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in the New Age of Empire*. "Their feelings—and they are often reduced to people who are important because of their feelings—are so much more authentic than anything expressed by government officials."

But speaking from the vantage point of "motherhood" is a double-edged sword. "Maternalism can be a trap, too," Enloe says, "since we often tend to trap women in that narrow space,

motherhood." As with the women of Greenham Common, who marched from Cardiff, Wales, to the military base in 1981, when they spoke first as mothers who feared for their children in a nuclear war, their objections are dismissed as naïve. "These women, as mothers, were trivialized by the government, who said, 'What could they know about radiation and fallout?' They were treated as the rank amateurs on the block," says Enloe.

"We want to make her the naïve mother, and if we hear that she is really politically conscious we start to doubt the authenticity of her maternal message," Enloe says, shedding some light on Sheehan's evolution from the darling of the press (in the early days, when she was portrayed, Rosa Parks-style, as a grief-stricken mom who simply materialized on Bush's doorstep) to a less trustworthy spokesperson of the left's antiwar message (once her connections to a more radical peace agenda were exposed).

There are other issues raised by the emergence of a soldier's mother as the icon of the peace movement. "It's good that the antiwar movement is open to military families, that it worked with them, played a supporting role to help get their own organizations going, but I think it has gone too far," says Rahul Mahajan, who serves on the steering committee of United for Peace and Justice and publishes the blog Empire Notes (www.empire-notes.org). He insists that the surge in American nationalism has led us to grant military families too much credence. "We fed into a critique of the war that was highly patriotic and jingoistic, an insistence that the war is wrong because it represents a deviation from America's past." Mahajan points out, however, that this does not come from Sheehan herself, who regularly insists that all war is "barbaric," places the Iraq War in the context of US imperialism and always mentions the numbers of Iraqi victims of the war in her speeches and interviews.

Sheehan's rise to prominence was in some ways haphazard. "I got this phone call from Cindy last August," says Nancy Lessin, co-founder of Military Families Speak Out, the antiwar group from which Sheehan's Gold Star Families for Peace evolved. Sheehan was headed down to Dallas to join a Veterans for Peace conference and had just heard that President Bush was on vacation at his Texas ranch. "Do you know how far Crawford is from Dallas?" Sheehan asked Lessin, reckoning that since she was in the neighborhood, she just might swing by.

But when she tried to coax the conference leadership to make a big showing in Crawford, she met with resistance. Organizers were worried that the protest would draw members and media attention from their own convention. In the end, somewhat reluctantly, a busload of antiwar protesters was dispatched to Crawford for the day; Sheehan, of course, stayed longer.

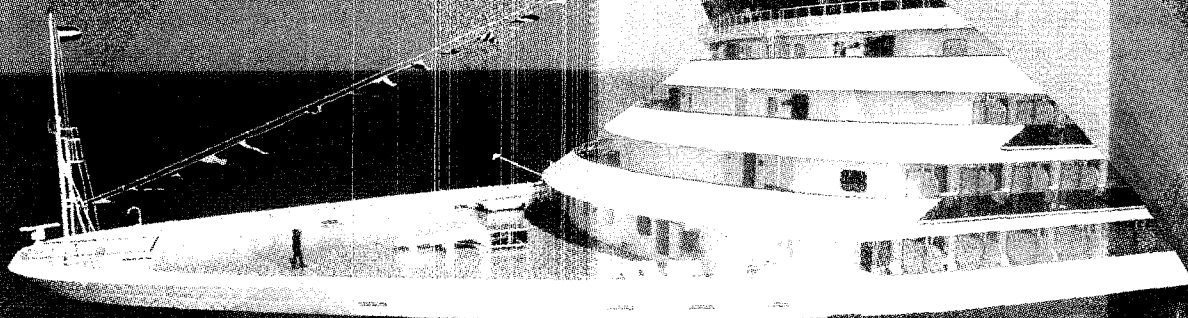
"Well, Cindy landed in the ditch with the best acoustics in the world," says Lessin. "Here's the White House press corps, and they're in Texas, and it's hot and the President's on vacation, and they're looking for a story. And here is Cindy, sitting outside Bush's ranch speaking, with all her heart and soul."

In this regard, Sheehan's emergence as the face of the peace movement was accidental. "In the last year, Cindy had done a lot

Sheehan emerged as a middle-aged, middle-class Everymom who was raising her voice in a time-honored shout to defend her kid.

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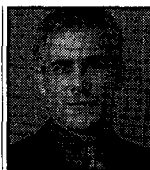
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December 16-23, 2006

Date	Day	Port of Call	Arrive	Depart
Dec. 16	Sat	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		5 PM
Dec. 17	Sun	Day at Sea		
Dec. 18	Mon	Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos	7 AM	4 PM
Dec. 19	Tue	Road Town, Tortola	2 PM	10 PM
Dec. 20	Wed	St. Thomas, USVI	7 AM	6 PM
Dec. 21	Thu	Day at Sea		
Dec. 22	Fri	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	7 AM	5 PM
Dec. 23	Sat	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7 AM	

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of work—traveling, speaking, writing—to grow into her wider role in the antiwar movement,” says Dobbs. “She was working her ass off to get ready.” But that doesn’t mean she was hand-picked by the antiwar movement. In fact, United for Peace and Justice, the largest antiwar coalition, held a February 2005 strategizing summit in St. Louis. Medea Benjamin, who heads Code Pink, a women’s organization for “pre-emptive peace,” nominated Cindy Sheehan to serve on the steering committee. “She lost the election because no one knew who she was,” Benjamin marvels. Since then, of course, Sheehan has become a key figure in the constellation of antiwar organizations and outlets—from UFPJ to MoveOn.org, Code Pink, Air America and the liberal blogosphere—that have emerged in the last few years.

Today, her fame creates some tension in the movement, especially because there are so many others like her who are equally dedicated. For example, Sheehan’s tale of woe is eerily similar to that of fellow peace activist Bill Mitchell: Sheehan’s son volunteered to help an ambushed unit in Sadr City on April 4, 2004; Mitchell’s son did the same. Both young men died there that same day. But despite Mitchell’s presence at her side for ten days in Crawford, at antiwar marches with her and in sequential speeches at peace rallies, Sheehan is a household name and no one’s heard of Bill Mitchell. Mitchell himself doesn’t complain, and Sheehan tries to get him onto talk shows with her—but media appearances begat media appearances for Sheehan in a snowballing effect that has nothing to do with fairness.

Combine that with the cynical mistrust of leaders in general on the left, and the questions about her multiply: “Is she for real?” we wonder, hoping to learn how she’ll weather the political vicissitudes.

In truth, Cindy Sheehan’s backstory lacks intrigue. She is one of those celebrities whose public persona meshes fluidly with her private self, the kind of subject over whom profile writers wring their hands in dismay; she led *Vanity Fair* writer Evgenia Peretz, for example, to spend her August reporting stint in Crawford chatting with local ranchers and store owners rather than laboring for drama in Sheehan’s psychology.

As I sat beside Sheehan on the side of a road in Mississippi waiting for the band of antiwar activists to join us, her answers to my questions were familiar, practiced and polished—as if she had shared these same thoughts with hundreds of reporters. Some see insincerity here; I see an act of contrition. Sheehan speaks of her son Casey’s death and her own complicit silence about the war at podiums, before cameras, into microphones as if the string of Hail Marys might eventually allow her to forgive herself.

“I was never for the war,” Sheehan says to me, as she has said to others. “I was against it in a vague way before Casey was killed, because I watched the news and I knew there were no weapons of mass destruction.” But Casey’s death, the 9/11 report and the Downing Street memo drove her to speak out. “I felt ashamed of myself for not doing something before Casey died,” she says. Her activism is atonement: “At least now, I’m going to try and make a difference.”

Her trajectory to activism is a morality tale she regularly relates, especially during her frequent speeches on college campuses. “What kept me from speaking out in the beginning was the sense that I couldn’t make a difference,” she says, noting that

she saw millions of people around the world protesting the war in February 2003. “And George Bush responded by saying, I don’t have to listen to ‘focus groups,’ and marched into Iraq.”

Now she puts her apathy into a larger context. “I think the people in power want you to feel helpless, because if we all find our voice, our power, we really can make a lasting difference in this country,” she says. “I think we have almost two-thirds of Americans opposed to the war today, and these people just need to find their voices.”

In her low-key way, she injects a radical critique into the discourse. It is not a uniformly sophisticated analysis. (For example, after a trip to Canada in May she gushed that “Canadians have to be the healthiest-looking and most polite citizenry that I have encountered in my travels” and told them it was OK to “copy our baseball and the huge hearts of the American people” but don’t copy our President.) And it has occasionally landed her in hot water: In an August e-mail to *Nightline* she is alleged to have complained that her son “was killed for lies and for a PNAC Neo-con agenda to benefit Israel.” Sheehan asserted the e-mail was doctored by “former friend” James Morris, who is an anti-Semite. The fact that two others were cc’d directly from Sheehan on the e-mail makes this unlikely.

But she is generally a pragmatic voice. “How can we translate the polls, which tell us most Americans oppose the war, into direct action and policy changes?” she asks. Within the peace movement, factions are wrangling over whether to put energy into more mass mobilizations or to work locally, hammering away at legislative issues and local elections. Focusing on what’s on the table is vital, Sheehan says, pointing to Russ Feingold’s proposal to censure Bush, John Kerry’s time-tied exit strategy for Iraq and Jim McGovern’s bill to cut funding for the war. She is cautiously optimistic. “The complacency of the American people is our biggest obstacle,” she says.

With that in mind, she sees herself less as an antiwar strategist and more as a motivator. “My role has been to energize people to go that extra mile or to take that initial step to become active in the peace movement. Maybe some Americans don’t really realize how bad everything is at this point with the war, if it doesn’t affect them personally,” she says.

So she gets personal—and political—with her own story.

Living this fight day in and day out (her travel is partially funded by donations to Gold Star Families for Peace and partly by Casey’s death benefits), I wonder if she ever gets frustrated with the peace movement. “Three steps forward, two steps back,” she says with a shrug.

Call it perspective. Or call it resignation. But Sheehan seems to exist above the fray, a kind of grand dame of the peace movement who declines to nigger over the details and simply urges all the various factions to get along. “Sometimes when I go into a community where there are turf wars among groups, Dede will have to call ahead and say, ‘If you don’t get your act together and stop arguing, Cindy is not going to come,’” she confides.

As we sit by the side of the road in Mississippi and the minutes tick by, I ask about the bus the marchers are to arrive in. We have been waiting a very long time.

“It’ll come,” she shrugs, as patient and confident about the gaggle of activists she is waiting for as she is about her mission, world peace. ■

WITH A HARD-RIGHT PRESIDENT POISED FOR VICTORY, A RESURGENT LEFT TAKES RISKS.

Colombia's Deep Divide

CHRISTIAN PARENTI

Bogotá

A hard rain fell upon the mountainside campus of Bogotá's elite Javeriana University, but the drumming and chanting of the student protesters outside the domed glass-wall auditorium penetrated nonetheless. On the podium, in wire-rimmed glasses and a charcoal suit, stood Colombia's far-right president, Álvaro Uribe Vélez. Behind the lean, pale politician the slope fell away onto a vista of treetops, lush mountains and the elegant Modernist contours of a city that can appear deceptively calm.

Uribe was here to address students and faculty as part of his campaign to win re-election on May 28. If successful, which is almost assured, he will be the first president of Colombia to serve two terms back to back—and it will mark a major victory for Colombia's far right just as the rest of the continent seems to be sliding ever more to the left.

"My security wanted me to use the other entrance, but we came through the protesters," said Uribe as the rain subsided. "They called me a fascist. A paramilitary. But let them come in and debate—this is an expression of Colombian democracy. I am not afraid of the shouting, I am just worried that behind it is hate."

During the bizarre five-hour verbal battle that followed, about 200 young activists took the audience microphone and accused their president of impoverishing the working classes, supporting repression and selling off the national patrimony. Uribe, in turn, calmly defended the role of big business in Colombia, touted what he calls "democratic security"—his total war on left-wing guerrillas and their civilian supporters—and accused the students of "crypto-communism."

"I blame the professors for the political disorientation of these youth," said Uribe at one point, his anger just barely showing. It was a statement made all the more chilling by recent revelations that the leadership of Colombia's Administrative Department for Security, or DAS, has been infiltrated by rightist paramilitaries who are supportive of Uribe and have used government computers to draw up hit lists of trade unionists and, yes, professors. Uribe has brushed aside the scandal, attacked the press for reporting it and sent a key suspect to a cushy diplomatic post in Italy.

Raised in the violent countryside near Medellín, in Antioquia province, but educated at Oxford and Harvard, the 54-year-old Uribe presents a strange mix of personas. At times he is the provincial *patrón*, the menacing tough guy with a thick regional



accent that sets him apart from the Bogotá elite. At others, he is the wonkish, workaholic Davos-man; the flexible, modernizing technocrat. The mix is subtly demagogic, as both Uribe personas pretend to transcend politics with appeals to common sense.

Colombia, with a sizable population of 42 million and a hard-right president, is the Bush Administration's only true friend in Latin America. Uribe has ridden horses with George Bush in Crawford, plans to sign a sweeping free-trade agreement with the United States and has secured several billion dollars in US military aid for his country.

Early in his first term, Uribe had moments of unprecedented popularity, once even reaching a 70 percent approval rating. His main achievement in the eyes of most supporters has been a limited rollback of the country's leftist guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN).

The war is a rather personal matter for Uribe: In 1983 the FARC killed his father, and in 2002 they almost got the president-to-be with a massive roadside bomb. In the past four years Uribe has imposed something like security on several key road links between cities, and the guerrillas have been forced out of several northern coastal population centers by right-wing paramilitaries.

"His policy is pure lead," says a former truck driver named Edgar approvingly. Edgar drove freight across Colombia for twenty-eight years but finally quit to drive a cab. "Before, if you didn't pay taxes the guerrillas would burn your truck."

Despite Uribe's popularity, he faces a new yet robust democratic left party, the Polo Alternativa Democrático. Formed in 2003, the Polo has done surprisingly well in recent elections—winning more than twenty seats in the Colombian legislature, and controlling the mayoral offices of several cities, including Bogotá, and ruling one provincial government.

The party's program is a sensible mix of social democratic policies that aim to contain and reform Colombian capitalism's worst features. The Polo wants better protection of civil rights, workers' rights and the environment; land reform and an end to privatization of state industries; tighter regulation of foreign capital and big business; and a less Washington-influenced foreign policy. And despite its urban origins, the Polo has strong support among peasants and Colombia's well-organized indigenous movements.

In the late 1980s and early '90s Colombia had a similarly mass-based social democratic party, the Patriotic Union (UP), with links to the FARC. But the UP was wiped out in an assassination campaign that saw 3,000 of its activists, including three presidential candidates, murdered by paramilitaries. The Polo

Christian Parenti is the author of The Freedom: Shadows and Hallucinations in Occupied Iraq (New Press). Research support was provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute.

has no links to the guerrillas. But Polo activists fear that Uribe's campaign-trail redbaiting will effectively associate the Polo with the FARC in the minds of many Colombians and thus clear the way for a violent onslaught from the right.

"In Colombia, if you run for office from the left you have to be willing to die," says a young Polo activist named Daniel.

The head of the Polo, Senator Samuel Rojas, is somewhat more understated about the threat. "We must insist on the rule of law," says Rojas as we ride with his bodyguards through the rainy Bogotá night toward a rally of striking bus drivers who want Rojas to mediate their dispute. "Our task now is to consolidate the Polo. We have to prove that we can govern in places like Bogotá so we can survive and build for the long term."

But in recent months several high-profile political figures have been murdered. One victim was Jaime Gomez, an aide to a Liberal Party senator critical of Uribe. Gomez disappeared in late March and showed up a month later, dismembered in a Bogotá park. Liliana Gaviria, sister of a former Colombian president from the Liberal Party who now attacks Uribe, was assassinated in April. And an aide to Polo Senator Gustavo Petro was recently killed in what the police say was a fall but what forensic specialists called a bludgeoning. Several weeks ago the brother of a Polo campaign manager was murdered after huge left-wing rallies in a paramilitary-controlled city. Uribe's critics say the murders are the work of the president's paramilitary allies.

Established by presidential decree in 1965, Colombia's antileft paramilitaries were originally legal auxiliary militias that worked with the Colombian state. But the paras were never just passive tools, and they soon grew into autonomous drug-trafficking mafias that even started killing and expropriating land from members of the traditional ruling elite and were declared illegal in 1989. By the late 1990s the paramilitaries had come together in a united front called the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC).

In late 2002 Uribe started a peace process with the AUC but excluded the guerrillas. Human Rights Watch and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have blasted the process as little more than a blanket amnesty that has strengthened and legitimized the drug-trafficking paramilitaries and allowed thousands of "demobilized" paras to move into Colombia's major cities.

The amnesty also seems to have triggered an economic boom that will help Uribe at the polls. Colombian economist and author Hector Mondragón argues that Uribe's amnesty for the AUC—which was accompanied by a liberalization of investment laws—has allowed the paras and other drug barons to launder huge sums of illicit cash through Colombia's financial markets. In the past four years the country's stock exchange has ballooned a staggering sixfold. This bubble, along with rampant deficit spending by the government, has momentarily buoyed Colombia's economy.

For most of late May, Uribe had stopped giving interviews to the press and was refusing to debate his opponents. But I

finally managed to corner him for a few quick questions as he was leaving an event. When I asked about the possibility of a drug-fueled boom, his answer was surprising.

"Yes, we had some years when the market was inflated by narco resources," said Uribe in English. Then he somewhat contradictorily added: "But in the last years, narco resources have actually decreased economic growth. I accept that we still have a big problem with narco-trafficking, and I pledge to fight that evil."

In fact, Uribe's connections with the rural narco-right run deep. As director of civil aviation from 1980 to 1982, Uribe was accused of handing out flying licenses to drug smugglers. The drug-trafficking AUC leader Carlos Castaño once described Uribe as "the man closest to our philosophy." As governor of Antioquia, Uribe set up a vigilante force called Convivir, parts of which eventually merged with the AUC.

Flush with huge sums of illicit cash from the paras and drug barons, the stock exchange has ballooned a staggering sixfold in four years.

The town of Chia, about an hour outside of Bogotá, is controlled by paramilitaries who are known not only for keeping out the FARC but also for their social conservatism and anticrime campaigns of "social cleansing": no pot smoking, panhandling, public drunkenness or prostitution here.

In Chia I meet Maria, a technician who voted for Uribe in 2002 but this time around plans to vote for Polo candidate Carlos Gaviria. Maria worked for a state utility but lost her job when Uribe privatized the company. Now she survives by renting rooms in her home and from the wages of her sons—one a waiter, the other an actor and teacher.

"At first I supported social cleansing. There was a man who was released from prison and was murdering old people. The paras found him and just killed him," says Maria. "A boy raped a girl and they killed him and four of his friends. At first they were killing really bad people."

Freddy, a bohemian bar owner in the center of Chia, shares this view. "I don't approve of social cleansing, but I admit I appreciate it," he says with a regretful shrug.

This attitude—an apolitical acceptance of violence—allows Uribe to be seen as a useful politician. Because Uribe mixes up a war on street crime with his war on communist guerrillas and the democratic left, he has cast his repression as a technocratic campaign against disorder in general. "The country needed *una mano dura*," says Maria.

Santa Fe, Bogotá's main red-light district, is also locked down by paras, but not of the stuffy sort who run Chia. Here "demobilized" paras moved in under the guise of social cleansing, then took over and ramped up the flesh trade. These are Uribe's lawless spawn: the logical outcome of his pampering "peace process."

Mouse is a gaunt and haunted-looking 26-year-old former paramilitary foot soldier who now plays guitar, lives in a cheap Santa Fe hotel and claims to survive by "breathing the air, nothing more," though he also admits to a long history of crime. Mouse won't use his real name for fear of reprisal, but he agrees to tell me about his life in the paramilitaries when we meet in a small corner bar for some midday beers.

About four years ago Mouse was a para with the Bloque

Central Centauros in the province of Meta, a hard-core war zone south of Bogotá. "I was a para, but I never committed human rights violations," begins the young man emphatically. "We fought the guerrillas. The army supported us with their Black Hawks [helicopters]. They would fire tracers into the guerrilla positions, and we would fire at the same spot," he explains.

"In the paras there are no drugs," says Mouse. "You pack and ship cocaine, and on leave you do whatever you want. But if you get caught doing drugs in the camp, the sentence is death!" He punches the air as if firing a pistol. "It's either death by hammer or death by chain saw. I had to kill a guy with a chain saw. The first time is hard, but you get used to it. Besides, if you don't, the physical violence is turned against you. So you adapt."

At one point in telling his life story Mouse stops: a *corrido prohibido* has rolled up on the jukebox and he needs to sing along. It's Uriel Henao's "El Guerrillero y el Paraco," a Colombian imitation of the Mexican genre *norteño*. In this song two strangers start drinking together, "their masks fall away" and they begin to confess.

"My *patrón* is Carlos Castaño, leader of the AUC," wails one of the drunks. The other announces, "I am loyal to Tirofijo, leader of the FARC, and I am a guerrilla." The song ends with a shootout and both protagonists dead.

Despite the horrors that define so much of Colombian politics, one still finds an almost invincible sense of hope among the popular movements that now form the institutional base of the Polo. Again and again, nonviolent social movements have been forced underground by terror, yet they keep rising up, phoenixlike, as soon as they have any space.

In Bosa, a sprawling, muddy slum on the south edge of Bogotá where both paras and the FARC operate, I find just such a struggle. The Muisca Indians were written off as extinct. But the Muisca are back. Thanks to Colombia's broad indigenous movement, they have won considerable rights that are enshrined in the 1991 Constitution—though, as Muisca leader José Reinel Neuta Tunjo is quick to point out, these rights are frequently violated.

Now the Office of National Planning wants to take Muisca farmland as part of a long-term plan to remake southern Bogotá's rural edges. But the 2,000 members of this community have built a strong organization. The Muisca support the Polo, but the election is not the center of their politics. Most of their work has focused on the project of cultural recovery and survival, dealing with traditional medicine, community education and small-scale economic development.

When I ask about the FARC and paras, Neuta Tunjo requests that we not talk about "this type of politics." It's clear that the looming confrontation with the central government is a terrifying prospect. But even if Uribe wins, which he almost certainly will, the Muisca will mobilize to save their fields: "We will go to the authorities with a strong and clear statement to demand our rights," says Neuta Tunjo. "We have no choice." So too for the other elements of the democratic left—the distant indigenous communities, the bloodied but still struggling unions, the latest crop of students and for the Polo—who are all too aware that, as the Polo activist said, to be active in Colombian politics means you have to be willing to die. ■

Fight Fire WITH Fire



Kennedy & Papantonio

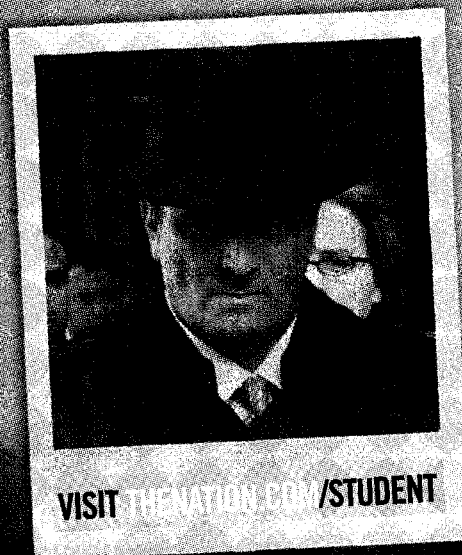
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HOFFA IS A POWERFUL VOICE FOR TRANSFORMING UNIONS—BUT OLD HABITS DIE HARD.

Teamsters: Changing to Win?

WILLIAM JOHNSON

Chances are you haven't heard of Silver Capital, a small, now-defunct Chicago-based company that used to manufacture mirrors, frames and glass-cutting boards.

Silver Capital's workers were mostly Mexican immigrants, working for substandard wages and zero benefits—no healthcare, no pensions, no sick days. And no matter what the auto companies tell you, manufacturing work is not fun. Silver Capital workers suffered severe injuries (fingers chopped off, limbs gouged) and rarely saw a dime of compensation.

If only they had a union, right? Actually, Silver Capital workers did have a union. They were members of Teamsters Local 743, a 13,000-member local representing workers throughout Chicago. "The union never helped anybody," says Marcela Garcia, who worked at Silver Capital for seventeen years. "You'd go to them with a problem, they'd say, 'It's not my problem. Talk to the company.'"

So when Silver Capital announced in September 2004 it was closing down for good—and offered employees like Garcia little to no severance—workers took matters into their own hands. They struck: a one-day walkout without union approval.

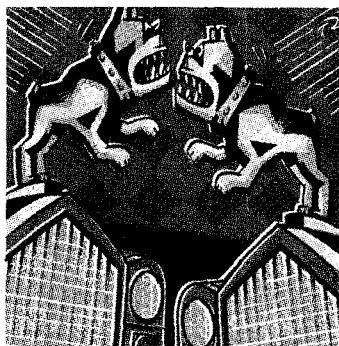
Union leaders responded quickly and decisively. Local 743 vice president José Galvan (who did not respond to calls for comment) went straight to the picket lines—where he told the workers that if they didn't get back to work pronto, he'd call immigration.

State of the Union

Welcome to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), a 1.4-million-member behemoth of a union led by the man with the biggest name in labor: James P. Hoffa. While Hoffa's grip on the union remains strong, he is facing an election challenge at the IBT convention in June from reformer Tom Leedham, principal officer of Local 206 in Portland, Oregon. The contest is one that ought to command the attention of the broader progressive community, since a healthy Teamsters union is key to a revived labor movement.

On paper the IBT is a force to be reckoned with; every day, hundreds of thousands of Teamsters load, ship and unload the goods that keep America's corporate powers fully stocked and in the black. With members handling cargo at critical points throughout the US economy's supply chain, the IBT has enormous potential power.

And though Hoffa, IBT secretary-treasurer Tom Keegel and four IBT international vice presidents refused to comment



TIM ROBINSON

for this article, they have not been shy about trumpeting their commitment to building labor power, organizing new members and restoring "Teamster pride." Hoffa was a major player in the drama last summer when the AFL-CIO split and the IBT defected to labor's new Change to Win Federation.

So why are Local 743 officials—lauded by Hoffa for their "proven and experienced leadership"—intimidating immigrants and cutting deals with management at a little mirror-making company like Silver Capital? The short

answer is, Teamster leaders often have a complicated agenda. Or, as Leedham argues, "There's a big disconnect between the PR coming from Hoffa and the reality of what's going on in our union."

According to the PR, things are looking up for the Teamsters. Last October Hoffa announced that the Teamsters "may be the only [union] growing." IBT organizing director Jeff Farmer says that Teamsters organizing activity "has ramped up" and adds, "the commitment of the leadership of our union to organizing is as high as it's ever been."

Now's a good time to put those claims under a microscope.

Thinking Big

Greg Tarpinian, executive director of Change to Win, says that the IBT isn't just talking about organizing: "At Cintas, the biggest laundry company in the world, the Teamsters have a campaign with UNITE HERE [the hotel, restaurant, and garment workers union]. The Teamsters are working with SEIU [the service employees union] on organizing school bus workers across the country. The Teamsters are as active as any of [Change to Win's] affiliates."

Farmer adds, "We have to do more—that's part of the reason for the split. We're taking on major multinational employers in huge industries, and there's no silver bullet. If there's any hope, it's to think on a scale like never before."

Thinking big—big unions, big campaigns, big ideas—seems to be the hallmark of the Change to Win unions. SEIU vice president Gerald Hudson gave a talk during the lead-up to the AFL-CIO split in which he outlined SEIU's vision for restructuring the labor movement; his refrain was "Size matters."

Says Tarpinian, who's been an adviser to Hoffa, the heads of other Change to Win unions and New York Governor George Pataki, "We're focused on growth. We realize that without rapid remedial action, we won't have the critical mass necessary to reverse course.... As far as restructuring the Teamsters for growth, Hoffa's done more than any Teamsters president."

The problem, says Leedham, is that the Teamsters aren't growing. "It's all been rhetoric and press releases. Check with

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the National Labor Relations Board. Hoffa hasn't been winning anything."

The Teamsters have indeed been losing members on Hoffa's watch, though they've kept their membership numbers level at 1.4 million since 2001 by absorbing smaller unions in the railroad and printing industries. (The AFL-CIO grew slightly, from 13.2 million to 13.6 million, in the same span of time.) According to the NLRB, the IBT, which won over 400 private-sector organizing drives in 1998, won only 248 in 2004. And according to the union's own reports to the Labor Department, the Teamsters have lost about 150,000 members since Hoffa's 2001 re-election.

Given that a key tenet of the Change to Win program is building power by organizing in "core industries," the IBT's lackluster organizing record in trucking is especially worrisome. Sandy Pope, president of IBT Local 805 in New York, says the Teamsters' power comes from "the truckers and UPS. If we don't shore up that power, the whole union suffers."

Truckers, as Pope suggests, have enormous power. As manufacturing jobs continue to be outsourced and offshored, truck drivers—who move auto parts from manufacturers to suppliers, groceries from warehouses to retail outlets—have more and more potential to disrupt the global chain of goods and services. Industry expert Michael Belzer, an associate professor at Detroit's Wayne State University, calls trucking "the glue that sticks the economy together." Edna Bonacich, a professor at the University of California, Riverside, who specializes in supply-chain issues, says that companies like Wal-Mart—which depend on the timely delivery of goods from offshore manufacturers—rely heavily on truckers. "There's a vulnerability there," she says. "If any group in this supply chain were to go on strike, it would cost [the companies] millions. A coordinated strike could cost them billions."

Bonacich's theory was borne out in the spring and summer of 2004, as port truckers on the East and West Coasts launched a series of strikes—without the backing of any major union—that shut down ports across the country and severely disrupted the flow of imported goods.

Unfortunately, while coordinated supply-chain disruption may be labor's greatest source of leverage in the global economy, Bonacich believes that "organized labor has not risen to the occasion." In trucking, while corporations have focused their resources on gaining control over the supply chain, Teamsters leaders have elected not to focus at all. "We have from A to Z in our union, airline pilots to zookeepers," president Hoffa told *The Nation* in August 2005. "We will always be a general union."

Indeed, Hoffa's organizing approach has become increasingly scattershot, with some of the IBT's biggest organizing victories coming in healthcare and the public sector. In recent years, says Belzer, "there's been so little activity in trucking organizing that there isn't anything to write about."

Centralize to Win?

In the Teamsters, says Pope, the Change to Win approach seems to have less to do with organizing core industries than with "a push to centralize the union, taking power away from the local level."

Both Pope (who's running for vice president on Leedham's slate) and Tarpinian note that the IBT has a long tradition

of local union autonomy, and that this tradition does not fit neatly with Change to Win's focus on centralized strategic planning. UNITE HERE general president Bruce Raynor—one of Change to Win's architects—says this can be a weakness when it comes to national campaigns. "Local autonomy has to give way to centralized, national leadership," says Raynor, "when you're going up against a centralized national corporation."

Leedham agrees with Raynor that "we need national coordination to beat national employers." But, he argues, "strong campaigns are built from the bottom up, by involving local leaders and mobilizing Teamster members." Leedham says that "the Hoffa administration's approach is to air-drop staffers from DC.... They bring cookie-cutter marching orders but don't offer any real resources."

Given Leedham's emphasis on the bottom-up approach, it's not surprising that his "Strong Contracts, Good Pensions" slate has been endorsed by Teamsters for a Democratic Union, the reform caucus that's been a consistent critic of the Hoffa administration. Tarpinian believes TDU is "not that relevant," noting that "Teamsters leadership is elected by the rank and file. It's a democratic organization." But formal democracy and functional democracy are not the same thing. Which brings us back to Chicago and Local 743.

As you can imagine, Silver Capital workers like Marcela Garcia were not happy when their union officers sided with management. All this happened during a union election year, while longtime 743 and TDU member Richard Berg was leading a campaign to unseat Local 743 president Bob Walston's administration (including José Galvan). Garcia decided to join Berg's "New Leadership" slate and run for vice president.

When the ballots were first counted in October 2004, the election was too close to call, but it looked like Berg would come out on top. So Local 743 officials stopped the count and ordered a new election.

"The rerun was a complete sham," says Berg. The New Leadership slate filed charges with the Teamsters' Chicago Joint Council 25 and the International, which responded with a deafening silence. They also filed charges with the Labor Department, which, shockingly, proved more responsive. On August 12, 2005, the department sued Local 743 for election fraud. But the appeals process moves slowly, leaving New Leadership in limbo.

About That Gorilla

"Corruption in the union," says Dan Scott, principal officer of IBT Local 174 in Seattle, "comes in a lot of shapes, sizes and forms." With the Teamsters, though, even after a decade of federal oversight, when people hear the word "corruption," they usually think about the mob. (Of course, it doesn't help that the search for Hoffa Sr.'s body—recently resumed at a Michigan horse farm—continues to get headlines from coast to coast.)

Scott, who's also running for vice president on Leedham's slate, says corruption remains "a very significant issue. It's important when we try to organize new workers. Management's unionbusting materials often feature the history of the Teamsters

and its ties to organized crime. People want to know they're joining a clean union."

Shortly after he became IBT president, Hoffa assembled a task force to investigate and eliminate Mafia influence in the IBT. Led by former US Attorney Ed Stier, Project RISE began in 1999 with Hoffa's blessing. A couple of years in, however, Stier says, he began to experience "resistance and outright interference" from top-level Hoffa advisers. On April 29, 2004, Stier and the entire staff of Project RISE resigned in protest. The IBT remains under federal supervision, and Project RISE has yet to be replaced. According to Sandy Pope, there are still "remnants of the mob" in parts of the union, but the perception of corruption can be equally damaging. "People get mad that we've spent millions of dollars bringing people in to clean up the union—and what has it accomplished? For the membership's benefit, we need to figure out how to clean up our union ourselves."

Changing to Win?

It's hard to imagine labor gaining a foothold in the age of Wal-Mart without a strong IBT. To many truckers, however, the union is a thing of the past. Today, says Edna Bonacich, "the big, over-the-road trucks are mostly nonunion. The intermodal part of the industry [truckers who transport goods from one part of the supply chain to the next—from ports to warehouses, for example] has become nonunion."

The de-unionization of trucking has coincided with steady job growth. According to Michael Belzer, there are more trucking jobs today than ever before. As employment has increased, says Belzer, working conditions have deteriorated. "Compensation overall has likely declined by about a third, and working conditions are very tough...and drivers are not making enough

per mile to make ends meet, so they just work more hours, drive more miles."

After six years of stagnation under Hoffa's leadership, it's not just the veteran reformers who are getting restless. Some of Hoffa's supporters from the union's powerful freight (trucking) division, including eastern region freight director Dan Virtue, have reportedly broken ranks and are looking to challenge Hoffa. IBT vice president Tom O'Donnell, who raised more than \$100,000 for Hoffa's last campaign, has announced his opposition and may run for president—or ally with Leedham.

As an incumbent wielding substantial resources, Hoffa remains a formidable opponent. His spokespeople maintain that Leedham lacks the support to mount a serious challenge. However, Leedham supporters won more than half of the convention delegate elections they contested, setting the stage for heated battles at June's convention and in this fall's IBT elections.

Divisions within the Teamsters may seem just another symbol of organized labor's continued fragmentation. But the most important split inside the movement remains the chasm between union leaders and the rank and file. Bridging that gap is the core of Leedham's vision for rebuilding the Teamsters.

"Workers want clean unions," says Leedham. "Workers need to know that the organizations they are a part of are democratic. In every area—organizing, winning the best contracts, political action—the more we can involve rank-and-file workers, the stronger the labor movement will be."

The upcoming IBT elections will have serious consequences within and beyond the union. A strong Teamsters union would be a powerful weapon in the fight for all working people. But the Teamsters need to clean up their own house before they can rebuild labor's.

LETTERS

C O N T I N U E D

(Continued From Page 2)

holds in the United States. Please discontinue my subscription. DAVID M. SILVERMAN

Sherwood, Ore.

■ "Too Hot for New York" has convinced me to renew my lapsed subscription.

J. CARL REYNOLDS

Spokane, Wash.

■ What is so sacred about New York City? There are plenty of other US cities that would put on this play: Seattle (in Corrie's home state), Portland, San Francisco, Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, etc. Is there an obstacle to presenting it in another location? HANS KRAUSS

Boston

■ Thank you for the excellent article on the New York Theatre Workshop's withdrawal of its production of *My Name Is Rachel Corrie*, and congratulations to Philip Weiss and *The Nation* for your courage. As one of the many American Jews who oppose the Israeli occupation and support the right of both Palestinians

and Jews to live in safety, I know about the power of the organized Jewish community and how it treats those who disagree with Israeli government policies. It is very important for Jews who support a just peace to make it clear that AIPAC, the ADL and other mainstream Jewish organizations do not speak for us on the Middle East. AMY PETT

Takoma Park, Md.

■ Philip Weiss's honest and searing words made the controversy understandable to me—someone who has never seen a New York play and whose grasp of the complexities of the Middle East conflict is at the kindergarten level. But I can understand the ideal that sent Rachel Corrie to Palestine, her determination to make a difference in a place of great suffering. That, it appears, is what the play is really about. I'm learning that the courage to move beyond fear can be made synonymous with treason and hatred, until we do not dare even to speak of courage. The play, *The Nation* and Weiss all contributed to the battle to keep courage from being bulldozed by fear. LINDA O'BRIEN

Brooklyn, NY

■ I was standing next to Grace Paley at the 1985 PEN Writers Conference while Meridel LeSeuer read out the names of American writers who, like herself, were blacklisted in the McCarthy years. Grace jabbed me with her elbow and whispered, "You can always outlive the bastards." That still sounds like a good idea, but one unfortunately not available to Rachel Corrie, who had she lived might well have become a member of PEN and faced a lifetime of struggle against the censorship well-known to all political writers in this land. The bitter irony is that if Rachel Corrie had not been murdered by an Israeli bulldozer, her eloquent descriptions of life in Gaza under the occupation might have reached a tiny audience at best, through a small publication or an Off Off Broadway venue, if they reached any audience at all. Dead, Rachel Corrie becomes the title character in her own *Antigone*, a tragedy made unforgettable as much by the power of her prose as by the size of the military machine she stood alone against. KAREN MALPEDE

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Keeping It Real

JACKSON LEARS

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme.

By Martin Jay.

California. 431 pp. Paper \$21.95.

There is something inherently strange about a familiar scene in modern Western intellectual history, one re-enacted many times during the past two centuries. A philosopher is in his study, constructing rational arguments on behalf of authentic experience—which he nearly always defines as nonrational. Somehow, he thinks, we are being robbed of primal, unmediated contact with the palpitating forces of real life. The obstacles to vitality may lie in the desiccating powers of modern science or in the encrustations of traditional religion or, if the philosopher is hostile to narratives of progress and decline, in the human condition. Whatever its explanatory framework, this philosophical cult of experience arises from a sense that full engagement with existence has somehow been rendered problematic, whether by social, spiritual or economic arrangements or by the sheer perversity of the individual psyche. Authentic experience, from this view, seems always maddeningly just out of reach.

How could this assumption acquire such enduring force? How is it that “experience”—like its kin “reality” and “life”—could be split off from the self, rather than remaining the ground of being in which the self is embedded? How did something universal and inescapable become external to consciousness—an object of feverish speculation and hot pursuit among men and (far less often) women of ideas? Part of the answer must lie in the historical experience of the thinkers themselves—their awareness of the world outside their study windows. Martin Jay rarely glances at that

world, though he can deftly dissect the shifting emphases in Kantian aesthetics or Deweyan ethics.

What we have in Jay’s *Songs of Experience* is a shining example of the history of ideas, an underrated genre of the historian’s art. An exceptionally learned, humane and prolific practitioner of his craft, Jay is among our most reliable guides through the key sites of twentieth-century social thought, from the labyrinths of Western Marxism to the thickets of French post-structuralism. *Songs of Experience* is a worthy addition to this *oeuvre*, though its history-of-ideas form sometimes seems ironically at odds with its content.

Jay’s story takes place in an Olympian realm where philosophers and other intellectuals converse with one another. Though they are occasionally roused to indignation, they rarely lose their capacity for consid-

The debate over experience—what is it? is it in crisis? can it be revived?—reveals a debate over the meaning of modernity itself.

ered argument—even though, as Jay observes, the word “experience” is “a signifier that unleashes remarkable emotion” in the thinkers who explore it. Participants in this conversation range widely, from Edmund Burke and David Hume to John Dewey and Richard Rorty, among many others. All get a fair shake, as Jay patiently and carefully—but never uncritically—reconstructs their positions. Still, amid all the arguments about the nature and value of direct experience, one cannot help occasionally wanting to walk away from the polite conversation, throw open the study window and listen to the shouts and murmurs in the street. The content of the cult of experience overflows the form of the history of ideas.

This is not to endorse conventional historiographical wisdom, which dismisses the history of ideas as “disembodied.” The dismissal stems from historians’ own cult of experience, their assumption that ideas

Jackson Lears is the editor of Raritan and the author, most recently, of Something for Nothing: Luck in America (Penguin).

are not part of "real life." Jay's dramatis personae challenge that belief at every turn, and their passionate commitment to the deconstruction of mind-body dualism shines through their occasionally opaque prose. Yet there are times when the pace slows to a crawl, and one wishes that Jay's own prose were a little more straightforward. His summaries are all inherently useful, but placed end to end they create a schematic effect. The flow of experience is channeled and contained in a series of compartments. Maybe there is a more fluid alternative, or maybe the tension between form and content embodies the inescapable contradictions in the cult of experience itself—it is, after all, an intellectual assault on intellectualism.

But that is not all it is. Jay's title, from William Blake, gives the game away. The importance of authentic experience has not only been argued by philosophers; it has been sung by poets, imagined by novelists, cultivated by artists and avowed by ideologues. Jay excludes these songs of experience to focus more sharply on systematic thought. This is a perfectly sensible decision, and there are rules against reviewers taking authors to task for not writing a different book. Yet it is worth imagining what the broader cultural history of the cult of experience might look like.

The preoccupation with authentic experience was embedded in Protestant sensibility, from the prophetic pronouncements of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century to the great revivals that swept across the young United States 300 years later. Real faith required not merely an emotionally jarring conversion but a long-term transformation of the self—a self made whole, transparent and all of a piece.

This coherent self embodied modern mastery, yet its very coherence was threatened by modernizing tendencies. Modern ways of knowing sliced experience into specialized disciplines. Modern industry removed work experience from primary processes of making and growing. Modern capitalism placed a premium on the manipulation of (often deceptive) appearances. And eventually, modern technology insulated the moderately affluent from much danger and discomfort. Even as Protestants (and later Romantics and Modernists) exalted authentic experience, by the early nineteenth century the forms of modern life made certain encounters more difficult to achieve. The idea of experience

became an imagined holistic alternative to disenchanted, fragmented ways of being in the world. Whether seekers of experience located it on the banks of the River Wye or on the streets of Berlin or San Francisco, they imagined it to be full, rich, intense. It eluded quantification and resisted reductionism. It could not be explained in terms of something else. It was what it was, irreducible. Wholeness was all.

Longings to immerse oneself in a flood

From Walt Whitman to the Abstract Expressionists, longings for authentic experience have resonated with special force in America.

of unmediated experience energized literary enterprises on both sides of the Atlantic but resonated with special force in America. They animated Whitman's ecstatic merging with the milling crowds on Broadway as well as Thoreau's search for the real in the woods around Walden, and they acquired more somber significance as orthodox faith lost legitimacy. Writers from Melville to Hemingway encountered experience as a looming cosmic plenitude that threatened to engulf human strivings for mastery and to baffle any effort to make sense of it all. The struggle to assert or sustain meaning in a meaningless universe energized a host of literary embodiments of authentic experience: Theodore Dreiser's youthful naïfs on the make, Frank Norris's speculative plungers, Sherwood Anderson's "grotesques" left behind by the locomotive of modernity. William Carlos Williams's slogan "No ideas but in things" epitomized a disdain for abstraction and a desire to re-engage mind with the material world, both emotions at the core of the literary cult of experience.

During and after World War II, the imaginative renovation of experience flourished among Abstract Expressionist painters, neo-orthodox theologians, existentialist philosophers and literary intellectuals with a psychoanalytic bent. In the wake of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, there was much to brood about. Brooders like Reinhold Niebuhr and Lionel Trilling wanted a notion of experience that took into account the dark truths of the unconscious or (as the theologians preferred) original sin. They wanted some acknowledgment that, in the end, the imperial self faced the implacable power of fate. And they wanted the pursuit of experience to include awareness of the ultimate experience: death.

This broader midcentury definition of

authentic experience informed the early New Left and the antiwar counterculture of the 1960s. The generation of those who cut their political teeth on the Vietnam War grew up in a suburbanizing society that seemed bent on creating a shrink-wrapped, synthetic version of existence; they also confronted a government policy characterized by systematic lies. No wonder they focused on authentic experience as a touchstone of personal and moral worth.

As the counterculture became assimilated into commerce, authentic experience became a mass-marketed commodity. Nevertheless, down to the present it preserves a core value as a benchmark—it is what cannot

be fabricated, faked or spun into a simulacrum of the real; it is what matters. This is not a theoretical issue. In our mass-mediated image empire, the Bush Administration has constructed its own political reality without regard to evidence, putting radical epistemology in the service of reactionary politics. Under these conditions, old ideas about truth acquire a new luster, and the ideal of authentic experience remains a necessity.

Yet the reverence for the real, especially when it exalts experience as an end in itself, can also have catastrophic consequences. Europeans repeatedly experienced them in the twentieth century. Throughout the nineteenth century, from Blake to Rainer Maria Rilke, European songs of experience had recognized the need to supplement spontaneous impulse with sustained reflection. But contemplation was engulfed by cataclysmic ideology. By the early twentieth century, the equation of authentic experience and unthinking action underwrote a politics of regenerative violence. For revolutionaries and reactionaries alike, the decisive (and murderous) deed seemed an irresistible alternative to bourgeois torpor. "What do you believe in?" Freikorps leader Ernst von Salomon was asked. "Nothing besides action," he replied. Fascism (and anarchism) were nothing if not cults of authentic experience.

Americans embraced regenerative violence, too, but usually concealed the lust for combat in clouds of providential rhetoric about their nation's missionary role in the world. Only occasionally have they openly celebrated the cleansing powers of war. At the turn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt and other patrician ideologues rallied Americans to take up the white man's burden in the Caribbean and the Philippines by singing a song of military experience. Combat was, for Roose-

vult, the most exalted form of “the strenuous life,” an essential means of preserving manliness amid the feminizing effects of modern civilization. Historians have written of a “crisis of American masculinity” in the 1890s, but in fact American masculinity (like other masculinities) is always in crisis; what changes are the instruments men use to confront the crisis. Roosevelt used the idiom of regeneration through imperial violence.

The sobering impact of two world wars made that sort of talk impermissible in polite company until quite recently, when neoconservative intellectuals began to sing similar songs and the “war on terror” provided legitimacy for them. Consider Michael Ledeen, in-house “expert” on the Middle East at the American Enterprise Institute: His *Machiavelli on Modern Leadership* argues that war “provides a real test of character” and “creates a pool of leaders for the nation” while “peace increases our peril, by making discipline less urgent” and “encouraging some of our worst instincts”—dooming us to become one of those “effeminate republics” his hero scorned. We are back in the moral universe of Theodore Roosevelt, and it is not a pretty place. Once again, old men are at their desks and in their clubs, singing the praises of war, while young men are experiencing the exquisite impact of steel on flesh.

Militarism, male fantasy and the rhetoric of regenerative violence do not appear often in Jay’s *Songs of Experience*. Occasionally one hears the sounds of far-off battle, but the war of ideas is what matters here. Many thinkers used experience as a stand-in for the God they had ceased to believe in, but no more than rival theologians did they agree on the precise features of their deity. Experience, Jay writes, has not been simply a “foundational term” signifying “incorruptible immediacy” but more broadly “the site of a productive struggle” among contentious claims about existence.

At the outset Jay makes a crucial distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. *Erlebnis* suggests “lived experience,” whether in the primal unity of organic community or the vital rupture of individual liberation. It is immediate, pre-reflective and personal—and associated with the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, with William James, with Martin Heidegger. It is the sort of notion that, from the liberal view, can start one down the slippery slope to soil worship. That is why *Erfahrung* con-

stitutes an appealing alternative. It refers to experience based on sense impressions (Locke) combined with cognitive judgments (Kant), which can become part of a learning process, characterized in the form of a narrative or adventure. It is at the heart of the *Bildungsroman*, or novel of self-development (*The Red and the Black*, *David Copperfield*), and while it resists simple linear notions of human progress, *Erfahrung* can be assimilated to a dialectical, crabwise version of advance. One can

The philosophical pursuit of experience began in early modernity with Montaigne, whose essays explored mortal man in all his fullness.

see why it appealed to meliorists like Locke, Kant and Dewey—and why the most ambitious philosophers of experience (Martin Buber, Walter Benjamin) sought a synthesis of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, ecstatic immediacy and mature reflection.

Jay implicitly acknowledges that the philosophical pursuit of experience is a product of early modernity. After a nod to the Greeks and Augustine, he warms to his subject when he discusses the humanist Michel de Montaigne, whose self-examination through recollection made him the first true philosopher of experience. Montaigne’s essay “Of Experience” (1587–88) refused fixed categories and definitions, pondered the frailties of the human condition (including his own), remained attuned to the pleasures of body and mind, and concluded that philosophy was nothing other than preparation for death—which, unlike other challenges, was impossible to learn about through actual experience.

But almost as soon as Montaigne had finished contemplating mortal man in all his fullness, Bacon, Descartes and their followers began to call his worldview into question. The attempt to grasp experience as a whole was futile, they claimed: Memory was far too slippery and imprecise to promote understanding of the self or of the world. For these thinkers, experience became an object outside the self, to be studied with methods of unprecedented precision. Numbers became the sign of scientifically verifiable experience. The wholeness sought by Montaigne was fragmented into specialized forms of knowledge. The process of rationalization was under way.

Yet after Descartes, rationalist certainties lost ground to probabilities. Through the eighteenth century, Hume and other empiricists questioned the reliability of procedures and instruments that had pos-

sessed an almost fetishlike charge for an earlier generation of scientists and philosophers. With the emergence of probabilistic thinking, statistical procedures displaced older notions of quantitative certainty. Locke’s medical training encouraged him to reassert the value of everyday observation. Hume went further, undermining the rational self as a source of knowledge, insisting that personal identity itself was a mere verbal artifact and that causality was a convenient fiction. It was left to Kant

to complete the Copernican revolution of subject and object, redeeming human cognition in the process. For him, the pursuit of truth involved the creation of coherence, as the mind sorted through the jumble of sense impressions. This was experience as *Erfahrung*, a journey toward greater understanding. Still, knowledge was not entirely a human construction; Kant preserved the possibility of the absolute by postulating a noumenal realm of timeless truths beyond the phenomenal world of everyday life.

These epistemological gymnastics were a mere prelude to the real songs of experience. As the German historian Wilhelm Dilthey later observed, “There is no real blood flowing in the veins of...Locke, Hume, and Kant, but only the diluted juice of reason as mere intellectual activity.” When Jay turns to religious and aesthetic experience, the blood begins to flow. Both these categories emerged from the shadow of cognitivist philosophy during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; both emphasized the embodiment of experience in fleshly, mortal humanity.

The key figure in the modern revaluation of religion was Schleiermacher, a liberal Protestant theologian who wanted to free religious experience from the brittle formulations of Kantian morality. The backdrop to his work, as Jay observes, was the ferment of popular piety on both sides of the Atlantic. The evangelical exaltation of emotional intensity revived the fears of anarchic anti-intellectualism among the “cultured despisers” of religion, whom Schleiermacher claimed as his audience. He aimed to create a version of piety that would be acceptable to elite sensibility by incorporating both aesthetic and spiritual experience into *Leben* (life). Rejecting rationalism and legalism, he celebrated religion as *Erlebnis*, a primal feeling prior to any doctrine or institution. The essential religious feeling, he thought, was one of “absolute dependence,” the sense of being

DUBYA'S DUNCIAD DEMOCKRAZY

DUBYA'S DIARY:

DayMon, 9/30/02

Defending dynasty, domus, Dollars "R" US,
Darts, DAR dames, DDT, daiquiris,
Derricks, duckys, Dunkin' Donuts, DOD,
Deficits, draughts, DUIs, Dear Diary,

Dehorning devilry, divinity disavowing,
Draconian Dracula de-Iraqing, Daddy,

Dandelion-dandy deflowering, deadheading, draining, disarranging,
Despised desert-despot de-potting, depurring, declawing, defanging,

Dismal Demo-damsels in distress doggy style dis, dismount,
Dog, dog-bite, de-bark, debilitate, debunk, discount;
D-Con, dun, doff dratted death-duty Demo-dogs,
Dash down DaschHundle, ditch Deutchlander-hun-hogs,

Declaim delirious, delusional dominance,
Detest deterrence, distemper detentes,

Dementia-diplomacy deploy, decency denude,
Dab, dither decorative, decorum-de-coring ditz,
Death rattler disgorge, Defense-defender de-brood,
Der Iraqi-eater, das Wolfhund DeWitz,

Delegate double barreled demoniac doers,
Daring duo, doppio derringers, Dick y John,
Dish up death wish-upon-a-star-war,
Demon drone (de-manned) Don,

Delight delectable do-or-to-die-for deputy dip,
Dog-top drum major, Drumstick DeLadle,
De-brain, de-blood dark drayman-diplomat (Kein Crip!),
Doughty dignity Domo Domain, Dr. MLK-disloyal.

Dad, dig: "Delenda est Dhagbad,
Drang nach Naher Osten, Dieu et mon droit!"
Dazzling danse macabre!
Dumb-down Moby Dick, Ahab!

DUBYA'S DAD: (Ahem!)

Deuce! Dipstick! Drippan! Dropout! Diablito!
Dime store denominator! DayGloing dytrogote!

Down, down damn doggy! Doggonit! Don't!
Dogtrotting, daytripping, drastic dynamo de trop,
Dinky dickens, doiled dolt, daydreaming dreamboat,
Dirty dancer, drained brain, drawling dunce, dunno!

Dufous duffer, divot, divebombing diva divine,
Devil-may-care, dark-minded, dire Dr. Diverti(De)mento,

DragKar (Dead ringer Kween, das ist klar!), doozy Deux Chevaux,
Designated deRanged Rover-driven, dead-stops on a dime declines.

Dios! Dionysius! Dominito, quo vadis?
Dhagbad's deathly Darth Vader dismiss?
Dominate? Disintegrate? Disimpact? Dulcolax?

Dos! Dicey decisions dubious doorways disclose,
Dreaded, deadbolted Dutch doors, deadlocks.

Due! Deadline's deadly, dwindles deck,
Deals dead-ends, deep-sixes off docks.

Duckling! Drink deeply, deploy dome, don't down drawers,
Day-to-day dawdle, doodle daffy doodads, decadent Dada!

Dogie! Doggery despise, dogs of war,
Dogfights, dog food, dog-eat-dog dogma!

Dewy dweeb! Dander's dangerous: dares, deposes, departs, dupes, deludes dudes.

Dolorous dilacerations, dismaying dismemberments, demoralizing dismountings,
Dispiriting dispatchings, deplorable droppings, dumpsterings, door darkenings,
Diminuendos, decrescendos, deshables hombres disused,
Dead ducks, dead doomails, deep doodoos, Dad's deja-vued.

Dumkopf! Dhagbad's Dark Age deathtrap!
Doorstop! Don't duad Dad's dead pan demeanor de door mat!

Doubt, doubt damn dot! (Dissolute sot!)
Dots disconnected des hommes deceive: Deception!
Desire demi-demonstration? Display depiction:
Demo-diamond drafted, dunce cap drawn!
Deft double-cross, death star-crossed demon!

Design da capo, de novo, do nothing, disport, distract, divert!
Dux! Deluxe! Debauch! Debase! Do base! DJ! Dish dirt!
Dolce far niente devise! Druthers disinhibit! Do-little delite!
Dig, dummy? Duh! Doobie? Doobie do! Despite!

Dump double agents, double talkers, double thinkers, double trouble double-quick!
Disown diadem, divest, divorce dastardly-deeded downtown-DC Duma-delinquents!

Downhill drive, DEET deviant, devouring driver ants,
Decamp dank drunk tank, daunting dantesque dunghill!

Deter double-dealing dirty dozens, degenerates, deficientes,
Duds, Dukes, dykes, dorks, Dicks, drills! Done deal!

Dearie, deicide disdain, deus ex machina deduce, discern decent denouement!
Don't dillydally, disobey, dishonor, displease! Do devoir! Dad demands!

Demier dark horse (du Chinois) deed (Droopy drawers, despoiled dungarees!):
Desideratum: De die in diem, de riguer, debrief, deplete,
Dopo doodie-deliverance, deposition, disposal, douching done,
Diaper doleful, dowdy, deadbeat, denuded derriere, denn, Dad's duds don!

Dankeschon! (Amen!)

DIXIE DEXTERS:

Drat! Double-tongued drake! Dropsy, dreary, draggletailed drudge!
Deadwood-Dad drags down, drizzles, Depends daily, dampens, does damage.

Dang! Doughy, double-chinny derpachy desires dominion's division,
Dorky donkey's denigration, degeneration, desperation, deformation,
Darwinian design devolution! (DNA deglutition!)

Demand D-Day! Dispatch dragoons, daggers drawn!
Est Pro patria dulce et decorum mori, dear John!
Delicium ditto est duckin' n' dodgin' dumdums! Duh! Anon!

Dead-letter dog tags! Details! Dolori! Demier cris!
Daisies! Daylilies! Mommy dearest! Deary me!

(Decapitation, delimbing, disarming demobilize, disable, drastically detract dexterity.)

DENIZENS' DECLAMATION:

Damnation!

Deaf-dumb, deep-dyed daft, daredevil, double threat Don Quixote, Dubya-dubbed!
Demure Dulcinea, doting Dama dominatrix, dull, dethroned Dulles duly drubbed!

Drooling disciples, dumbbells, doughboys, door gunners, dog faces drafting,
Drumbeats deafening, dry docked dreadnoughts, destroyers downstreaming,

Dickheads, dittoheads, double bubble heads, dimwits, dotards, dirty dogs,
Dilettantes, doberman dogs, demagogues, deeply deluded demigods,

Diogenes dismaying, defective definitudes defining, dissenters dissuading,
Demurrers demeaning, discourers discomfiting, deliberators delimiting,
Dialoguers dislodging, distant dwellers detesting, disestablishing, depopulating;

Donnybrooks, debacles, dissolution, desolation, disorder, deluge dopo di te,
Desertification, disaffection, dismay de profundis, dizzying disarray,

Demolition derby, disaster defiantly decreeing, dissonance, dissension disseminating,
Dovetails depluming, damned death row dominoes down falling,
Detours darkly determining, Damocles' dagger delicately drooping,

Dialing-M-for murder, dime-dropping,
Dysfunctional dry drunk dialing Daddy,
Dual diagnosed disregarding detoxing,
Demos' dejeuner, de jure democracy,
Disjecta membra dejecting!

DENIZENS' DEMANDS:

Desist, dread dwarf-elect! Derring-do don't! Do drop dead, dope!

Dustbin destiny dismiss, doomsday devices disarm, dragons disyoke,
Devilish devastation, derelict deregulation, destabilizing destruction delay!
Deoxygenation, deozoneation, denaturation, disfiguration do away!
Defilement, defoliation, deforestation defenestrate, defray!
Detour, detonator! De-gas, disgrace! Decelerate, decerebrate!
Decaffeinate! Defibrillate! De-escalate!

Depraved disinformation disprove, distil,
Deleterious demarche detrain, derail!

Detestable decoy, doctrinaire DEMOCKRAZY, deliberately dispel!
Devotedly descry: D-E-M-O-C-R-A-C-Y! (Oder, dodo, do go to Hell!)

Dubya, diverse demerits deserve del mundo,
Defrocking, denunciation, down-graded Ds!
Dios nos salve, dauphin desperado,
Dimly dimpled discard de-votee!

DUBYA'S DECISION:

Drive! Diatribe! Dubya deplores disputation, derision, duda, data, down DOW, dew,
Dau, duhliteration, Dacron, day care, dictionary, discourse, disquietude, dude!

Daddy's dudly, dotty, doth dodder, demonstrate DTs. Depart, desert dowdy, dour,
Depressant, descended (de-laddered) Dadder, decrepit, docile, done-for dinosaur!

Denizens' disgruntled, de moi disrespectful,
Dyspeptic, distempered, de moi doubly doubtful.
Dubya dem disdains, dispossesses! Dismissal! (Y'all!)

Danger? Da! Da die done dispatched, dubitation doffed,
Dilemma doohickey dehorned, disquisition, dickering docked,
Double negatives dedifferentiated, dualism de-coupled (de-minded, de-mattered),
Daily double drug dose downed (Dr. Pepper, D.O.C.), disengagement doubly standard.

Dynamite doldrums, drum up dynamism,
Demos demolish, diminish, de-menschen!

Devoted doves, Dove bars debar, disHumor, devour,
Decadent dreadlocks detangle, decouper, dishevel,

Dippy, dingbat draft dodgers dismantle, drop-kick,
Deplorable Demo-dupes ding, ding-dangit!

Dapper doppelganger (Daffiness a deux): Dutch:Dubya!
(Der Herr? Vive la difference! Double take! Dolly! Ja doch!)

Dallas-Dubya democratize, demilitarize, decimate (Do the math!), deBaath doth,
Deliver, delouse, delocalize, demoder Dromedary Dome-domain does;

Dumb down, dumbfound, dope-a-rope, deep freeze, defrost, deep fry,
Debride, debone debonair Dhagbad Dune-Doge,
Devaluate, depreciate, decollate, demote, demonize
Ding dong-dinar ding-a-ling, dynasty-denied Daddy-O!

Dukes draw! Duel, dust devil! Dirt bag! Dung beetle! Dippy-skinny denudo!
Duplicité, demas palacios, damn pottery, duplicate depots dappertutto!

Dune buggy! De-bugging, deflating, deflagrating, debenture, debility, demise,
Dents, dentifrice, duress, detritus, ding, dung, dungeon, droughty dates derive!

Dipso, dead soldiers, Djibouti, Dubai,
Damascus, do so dead drunkenness deny!

Deo Volente! Do volare! Du! Dinchavotare?
Doyawanna Dubya disown? Doyagotta vomitare?

Dar es Salaam! Dammi il salame!
Damn doomsday! Dance, Salome!

Dunk-slam Dhahran! Drunk Uncle Sam!
Dewars! Do wah Diddy! Do it up! De wars is on!
Dram! Do it to it! Don, do on! Drop dA bomb!

Damn, DickWitz! Das ist gutter sake-san!
Din! Dim! Dom! DonRummny, drink on!

Ducky! Dear Lord! Dad? Mom?

DISCLAIMER:

Dog-tired, dog-eared doggerel, doggone dog-Latin,
Dithyrambic dithering, dunces dosido dancin',
Droll divine drama, delicious divertissement,
Dreadfully dry dirge-dregs, dabbling double-entendre.

"De gustibus in dramaturgus non est disputandum,"
Deo Gratias, dog-day's done,
Dies Irae, dizzy, demain.
Dios mio! Damned!
Damen und Herren!
Gott im Himmel!
Amen!

DADDENDUM (Despues dos anos, deteriorating Ds)
9/30/04

DUBYA'S DEEP DECEMBER DICTATOR DREAM:

"Now! Dasher, now! Dancer, now! D' Abu Ghraib-assers;
"Now! Prancer, now! Vixen, now! Nix on Hans Blixem;
"On! Chaos, on! Cupidity, on! Neocon-Stupidity;
"On! Dunderheads, on! Embeds, on! Warheads, on! Bhagdeads;
"To the top of the pork! To the street of the Wall!
"Now, dine away, dash away! Steal away, stash away!
"Now, torch away! Trash away! Dash away All!"

Ashes, ashes, all fall down.
O, Dubya! O, Dark deceiver!
Down under, defrauding clown!

DICK GAMEY'S DUMB LUCK:

2/11

Dadgummit!

Dodgy diehard dumb cluck, doubling back, debouched, didn't dodge, didn't duck
Dusty, dewlap duro-chap, dab hand desk jock downing doubles (Drink-it-up!),
Duckblind, duck stepping, duck laming, double vision, Dub-rub Deadeye Dick(-up)!

Dodgin' diamondbacks, drop attacks, dewdrops, due diligence, deerflies, Dien Bien
Phus,
Depradatin' Dallas dowager's dude ranch digs, doubled up duck quackers quick-drew,

Did decamp, downplay, delay divulging de facto defacement, de-furment (depilation),
Deprive deputy due drug testing, drinking detection, dragged out DA dragnet
discussion,

Deposition, discovery, docket, dock, day in court, due process, indeterminate detention,
Dog-handled dribblin', defecatin', dysordinary disappearance-rendition, death squadron.

Downright dependin' on down-n'-out discredit, Deep Throater-dubbed Dibby
Drowning documents, discreet, dark dirty war secrets (Decode dis, Da Vinci!),
Drenched, downbeat, died down, dear departed, DIA dunk-boarded detainees.

Dude didn't die! Lucky Ducky! No DOA!
Danke! De nada! (Dissemblin'? No way!)

Dished-out due cento derm dimples, dangling doodads!
Demo's bird dogs didn't door-to-door deliver! (Dat's too bad!)

"Demolition Accomplished!" (Donate the devil his due!) Done devildom's mission,
Did dimenticar (Devil's-in-the-details!) due diplomacy, devilishly dumb omissions.
Decalogue di Dio (Do's 'n don't's) desecrate, decommission! (Deus vobiscum!)

Democratic Republic doyenue ("Don't Tread On me!") disrobe, deathbed, devirginate,
Disarrange deck chairs, Destroyer (Ship d'Etat) deep drafting, drifting, deviate,
diluviate,

Drilling, dumping, democratic decisionmaking dishonorably discharge, dysregulate,
Das Land (Dead Sea to shining sea) double-your-denaro develop, disturb, despoilate,

Dough-re-mi (Do me right!) disburse, dead-give away, divvy up, dispensate,
Deep distrust, depression, disservice, death kiss dead ahead dead reckon, destinate.

Divine right Dick defies dead-ender destiny, disdains demission,
Decorously decrees (despite ED, duty dereliction): "Do dick'em!"

(Down curtain!)

Donated by
Steve Marzicola
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overwhelmed by a power beyond our control or even understanding.

Stirring and psychologically acute, Schleiermacher's hymn to *Erlebnis* nevertheless proved troubling. It could be appropriated for sinister purposes, as it was by German nationalists in World War I. And by focusing on human psychology, it could lose sight of God altogether. The same problem affected William James, one of Schleiermacher's legitimate heirs, whose *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) concentrated exclusively on "individual men in their solitude" and asserted that "the real core of the religious problem" was summed up in the phrase "Help! Help!" Such theologians as Karl Barth and Rudolf Otto aimed to rescue religious experience from mere functional efficacy by redirecting attention from the believer to the object of his belief—the God who was "wholly Other." In *The Idea of the Holy* (1917), Otto insisted that the awe-struck experience of "the numinous" involved knowledge as well as feeling, but that it was impossible to convey this experience through language or concept alone. Contrary to Freud, Durkheim, Malinowski and all the other great reductionists of twentieth-century social science, Otto and Barth insisted that religion was irreducible to anything else.

What may have been the most profound explorations of religious experience were conducted by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. He began his career as a youthful devotee of *Erlebnis* but gradually developed an outlook more open to otherness, which culminated in *I and Thou* (1923). He steered a subtle course between psychology and theology. Criticizing James's psychologism, he wrote that "the great mystics did not have experiences, they were had by them." Yet he was also wary of Otto's emphasis on divine Otherness, observing that "of course, God is 'the wholly other,' but he is also the wholly same: the wholly present. Of course, he is the *mysterium tremendum* that appears and overwhelms, but he is also the mystery of the obvious that is closer to me than my own I." Seldom have the extraordinary and the ordinary been so gracefully merged in the philosophical discourse of experience.

Like seekers of religious experience, worshipers at the shrine of beauty aimed to reconnect body and soul, self and world, by turning a particular form of experience into a stand-in for the whole—or at least a path to wholeness. Aestheticism arose

in the cultural capitals of Europe during the late eighteenth century, when ornament and luxury were spreading and a commercial traffic in images threatened to erase any distinction between objets d'art and mere commodities. Neoclassical aesthetes wanted to restore a sacred aura to the artwork but on a secular basis, as an embodiment of universal beauty.

Still, there was no denying that in a (comparatively) disenchanted universe, the work of art could no longer embody

Marxists debated whether experience was crushed by late capitalism or whether it could be rescued by the child's-eye view of life.

"real presence"—and beauty could no longer be seen as an emanation of the divine. Not that Kant, Burke and a few of their contemporaries didn't try. Indeed, they began to make even more extravagant claims. The idea of the sublime evoked an experience of transcendence that resonated with Kant's noumenal realm. Aesthetic theorists refashioned the sacred by viewing objets d'art as its vessels. But rather than seeking to reconnect the sensuous and the spiritual, eighteenth-century aesthetes elevated aesthetic experience to an ethereal plane by stressing its "disinterested" quality. This kind of thinking turned naked women into "nudes."

Despite the theorists' efforts, Jay notes, objets d'art continued "losing their integrity as self-sufficient entities in the world" and as "exemplars of universal beauty." Patterns of patronage became more commercial and more complex; according to Jay, the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere meant an unleashing of centrifugal forces, with new aesthetic emphases on pluralism, tolerance, variability. Romantic aesthetes, led by Friedrich Schiller, grew impatient with the bloodless passivity of Kantian "disinterest" and eager for a more active conception of aesthetic experience.

Out of this dissatisfaction arose two influential ideas: the belief in art as *promesse de bonheur* (Stendhal's phrase, which signified profound fulfillment for thinkers from Friedrich Schlegel to Herbert Marcuse) and the notion of the Romantic genius. As Jay wryly observes, "there was general agreement that the genius possessed a heightened capacity for authentic experience, which put him above the common herd of men." There was much masculine hysteria behind this idea: Sade epitomized it and Goethe satirized it in *Faust* (1808–32). By midcentury

the *flâneur* had displaced the genius, and Romantic tradition had narrowed into the separatist vision of *l'art pour l'art*. Despite the efforts of John Ruskin and William Morris to combine aesthetic and social criticism, the popular image of the aesthete became that of a wan and withdrawn figure, too sensitive to withstand the slings and arrows of ordinary experience.

The understanding of aesthetic experience as something subjective, receptive and contemplative had begun to collapse in on itself, exacerbating the fear that (as in religion) the "real presence" of the artwork (like the presence of God) would be lost in a fog of incommunicable feelings. As Heidegger observed, "even the much-vaunted aesthetic experience cannot get around the thingly aspect of the art work." For Heidegger's contemporaries Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, the battle to save the material basis of aesthetic experience was part of a much larger struggle against the corrosive cultural impact of "late capitalism"—which threatened to destroy all forms of genuine experience by reifying abstractions into things ("the economy") and alienating the worker from his work. Adorno suspected the struggle was already lost, but Benjamin held out some hope. In the Wordsworthian tradition, he evoked the child's-eye view as the criterion of "absolute experience" and sought opportunities to sustain that perspective in the unpromising world of the present.

Like Schleiermacher and Otto, Benjamin wanted to rescue experience from the splintering impact of capitalist modernity. But he never bought into the nonsense peddled by Ernst Jünger and other proto-Fascists, never reduced *Erlebnis* to battlefield combat. In search of a god-language, he fell in with Louis Aragon and the Surrealists, who persuaded him that archaic longings and dreams could still be found in the banalities of kitsch. This was heartening; maybe the culture of late capitalism was not as monolithically reified as he had feared. But he could not escape the feeling, especially in the wake of World War I, that something had snapped in history, that the world was being overtaken by a new barbarism, that the resources of culture were exhausted. Even his friendship with Bertolt Brecht, and their dalliance in revolutionary fantasies, could not stop him from mourning lost experience—most memorably in his lament that the objet d'art had surrendered its "aura" of singularity to the standardizing processes of mass production.

Even John Dewey shared some of Benjamin's pessimism about the prospects for aesthetic experience in the modern world. In *Art as Experience* (1934), Dewey tried to restore the balance between art as objective artifact and art as subjective perception. Arguing (as Ruskin and Morris had) for an aesthetics of everyday life, he nevertheless acknowledged the difficulty of having an aesthetic experience in modern society, where "No one experience has a chance to complete itself because something else is entered upon so speedily. What is called experience is so dispersed and miscellaneous as hardly to deserve the name."

The statement that experience has been impoverished by modernity sounds out of character for Dewey, who was probably more enthusiastic about the promise of modern life than anyone else in Jay's book. Yet as an American pragmatist, Dewey shared James's sense that the wholeness of experience had been concealed by conventional ways of understanding the world. Beyond this common assumption, the two pragmatists diverged. James was fascinated by the "blooming buzzing confusion" of "pure experience." He was convinced that we had somehow lost contact with this primal vitality, and he spent much of his career trying to construct a "mosaic philosophy" that would recapture the multiplicity of a "pluralistic universe." But James knew that it was difficult if not impossible to translate pure experience into language—as difficult as it was to describe a mystical religious experience. So he was thrilled when he read Henri Bergson's vitalist manifesto, *Creative Evolution* (1907), and summarized its accomplishments to a correspondent: "All our positions, real time, a growing world, asserted magisterially, and the beast intellectualism killed absolutely dead!"

Dewey was never as viscerally engaged as James was with the recovery of *Erlebnis*. He was committed to *Erfahrung*—a progressive, human-centered process of growth through problem-solving engagement with the world. Yet his humanism was less capacious than Montaigne's (or James's). Despite Dewey's own experience of loss—two of his children died very young—he never tried to mix what James called "life's more bitter flavors" into his philosophy, never openly contemplated the ultimate experience of death. His account of experience remained humane, flexible and democratic, but curiously incomplete.

Deweyan pragmatism posed some key questions for devotees of experience. Given the commitment to endless experimenta-

tion and growth, what was the status of past experience, of history, in the pragmatic world picture? Could it be understood on its own terms, in all its strangeness and singularity, or would it be merely a jumping-off place for the present and future? Dilthey and other historians, as Jay deftly shows, were determined to assert the "pastness" of the past and the value of understanding historical experience for its own sake, but also as a path to self-knowledge. Dilthey aimed to recapture past *Erlebnis*, which he understood as "experience in its concrete reality...made coherent by the category of meaning." Generations later, social and cultural historians in the 1970s picked up the thread of "lived experience." Most had never heard of Dilthey and would have had no interest in his hermeneutics. But they did want to recover the everyday life experiences of ordinary people, and what they found was often strikingly at odds with progressive conventional wisdom. Past experience, understood on its own terms, posed a challenge to "the enormous condescension of posterity."

The historian who most effectively assaulted the condescension of posterity (and who coined that phrase) was E.P. Thompson, whose book *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) revealed the profoundly serious critique of capitalism developed by Luddites and other local radicals who had been dismissed as loonies by liberal historians. The historical scholarship of Thompson, combined with the literary scholarship and criticism of his contemporary Raymond Williams, was a bold effort to reclaim the politics of experience for the democratic left—and specifically for their own culturalist version of Marxism. The political meaning of experience had historically been the property of what might loosely be called the right, whether nationalists like Jünger, for whom *Erlebnis* implied the sublime sacrifice of self for nation; or organicists like Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott, for whom experience implied the unreflective wisdom of custom and tradition. Was it possible for the left, with its utopian rationalism and disrespect for the past, to construct a politics of experience? Dewey tried but ended up in milk-and-water meliorism. His *Erfahrung*, like Kant's, needed a dose of *Erlebnis*—a dimension more grounded in the concrete actualities of everyday life. That is what Thompson and Williams supplied. Like Burkean conservatism, their Marxist politics of experience was intended to be a critique of the left's utopian rationalism (reincarnated most recently in the work of Louis Althusser). It

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was also an effort to explore the radicalism of tradition, to show how the most ferocious challenges to British capitalism were not inspired by progressive ideology but grounded in local attachments, customs and practices—all of which came together in a common culture, or (in Williams's signature phrase) "a whole way of life."

Culturalist Marxism, it turned out, had a limited shelf life. During the last thirty years, as Jay confirms, the postmodern turn in the humanities has challenged the very notion of "lived experience" as a meaningful concept—as well as the assumption of an autonomous, coherent self who does the experiencing. Yet among the thinkers who might be characterized as postmodern in Jay's book, only Rorty dismissed experience altogether. He insisted that everything was mediated by language, even such apparently straightforward sensations as the taste of an onion, and he dismissed any notion of a nonlinguistic realm as a regression to Kantian mystification.

But most postmodern thinkers preferred their onions unmediated. The idea of experience remained indispensable to a characteristic project of twentieth-century intellectual life: making sense of sensations in the absence of God. Nietzsche, the godfather of this enterprise, appears frequently in Jay's account but receives no sustained attention except as a precursor of poststructuralism. For Georges Bataille, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, the pursuit of extreme sexual and imaginative experience—the Surrealist "derangement of the senses"—became ever more fevered. This quest for intensity was often ironically at odds with the experience of reading the prose that described it, prose that was filled with opaque abstractions and sweeping assertions. In the end, Jay argues, the French thinkers offered a "reconstitution" rather than a rejection of the idea of experience.

They started by abandoning the quest for wholeness. For Bataille, Barthes and Foucault, the sense that personal identity had become dispersed was not a soul sickness to be cured but a source of strength. All three exalted the emancipatory possibilities of the fragmented self. Indeed, they pressed the point, celebrating the loss of conscious control in ecstatic self-immolation. They seemed to be groping toward a mystical experience beyond language, without closure and without God. Death, for them, was not merely an inescapable necessity (as it had

been for midcentury existentialists and neo-orthodox theologians) but a "limit-experience" to be courted. Unlike the Fascist cult of death, this courtship rejected conventional virile heroism and instead evoked the dream of Nietzsche (in Jay's words): "the sacrifice of the integral, armored self in the hope of recovering a lost Dionysian community."

Yet the recovery of community could never be complete. The rejection of wholeness, the fear of stasis, the suspicion even

Postmodern thinkers like Foucault abandoned the search for wholeness, seeking their thrills in shattering, fragmentary 'limit-experiences.'

of stillness—these habits of mind created a common pattern in the French poststructuralists' writings, a kind of rhetorical brinkmanship. As Jay observes, Bataille's "willingness to live life as a radical experiment, involving the body as well as the mind, risking danger in the quest for a certain version of redemption," led him to construct the concept of "inner experience"—an amalgam of violence, pain and erotic ecstasy. Yet his own "inner experiences" of sexual experimentation were momentary punctuations of his mundane life. One could immerse oneself in the abyss of nonbeing, but only temporarily.

Bataille is one of the people we have to thank for all the chatter about "transgression" in the academy during the past several decades. Barthes is another. Searching obsessively for forbidden sexual pleasure, he compared gay cruising to the mystic's quest for union with the deity. But there was no salvation for Barthes, no sense of oneness or quietude, or even regret over their absence. The quest for wholeness, he believed, was a fool's errand. His own quest was committed to endless repetition, subject to occasional impotence and failure, but always recharged by aspiration for the fleeting *frisson*. Authentic experience, for Barthes, was not something lost in a harmonious past but endlessly (if temporarily) re-created in a chaotic, discontinuous present.

Foucault was a little more open to the postlapsarian model: He suspected that modern sexuality had actually been devalued under the guise of liberation—and those suspicions led him to his most probing work, *The History of Sexuality*, which unmasked the rhetoric of sexual freedom to reveal its complicity with new forms of social coercion. Acutely aware of the limits of liberation, Foucault was even more committed than Barthes to explor-

ing "limit-experiences" in theory and practice. He wanted nothing less than to pulverize the conventional unified self. Like his heroes Nietzsche, Bataille and the novelist Maurice Blanchot, Foucault demanded that experience perform what he called "the task of 'tearing' the subject from itself in such a way that it is no longer the subject as such, or that it is completely 'other' than itself so that it may arrive at its annihilation, its dissociation. It is this de-subjectifying undertaking, the idea of a 'limit-experience' that tears the subject from itself, which is the fundamental lesson that I have learned from these authors." How a "limit-experience" became a "lesson"

was obscure. And how one put this quest for limit-experience into practice was an equally tricky question; much has been guessed about Foucault's adventures beyond his study.

But those questions are less interesting than a larger one: How do we assess the life of the mind in a society where fully individuated selves celebrate the implosion of the self, and the "limit-experience" of annihilation becomes a topic to be discussed over Pepperidge Farm cookies and Styrofoam cups of coffee? In the postmodern academy, intellectuals still ponder the possibilities of intense experience—though many emphasize the "performative" dimensions of behavior once deemed spontaneous. In current talk about experience, the contrast between form and content is even greater than it once was: Abstract formulations sanctify transgressive limit-experiences. Sade (at least in some circles) has supplanted Marx as the revolutionary thinker du jour.

Extraordinary intellectual fashions reveal larger historical significance. The shrinkage of social vision from the democratic socialism of Thompson and Williams to the desperate individualism of Barthes and Foucault suggests the impoverishment of cultural politics on the left during the late twentieth century. Other, more tentative questions can be raised about the poststructuralist vogue, as well. Is there a link, however elusive, between the poststructuralist courtship of violent death and the postmodern media's mass-produced simulation of it? Or between the intellectual fascination with limit-experiences and the popular culture of apocalypse? Who knows? Maybe Foucault and Jerry Falwell are brothers under the skin. It would not be the first time the cult of experience had connected a demonic divine and a holy devil. ■

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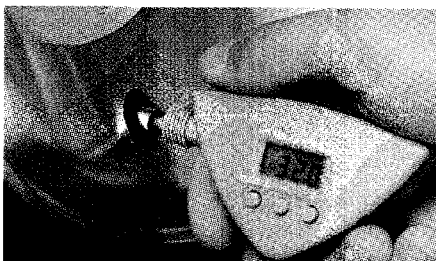
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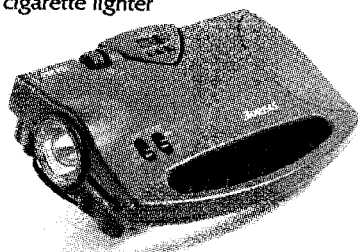
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Anatomy of a Murder

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OUR TOWN: A Heartland Lynching, a Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America.

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On the night of August 7, 1930, in the town of Marion, in Grant County, Indiana, a congregation of white Hoosiers—men, women, children—participated in a bizarre American ritual: the lynching of a black man.

Or rather men, for in Marion there were two: Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith, both 19, charged with the robbery and murder by shooting of a white man, Claude Deeter, 24, the previous night in a local lovers' lane. Shipp and Smith had been interrogated using methods common in that era, and based on the confessions thereby obtained they most likely would have been convicted. The prosecutor, the *Marion Chronicle-Tribune* reported, would demand the death penalty, and the "youths...cringed in the shadow of the electric chair." But the *Chronicle* also reported another allegation: Deeter's companion, 17-year-old Mary Ball, claimed she had been raped.

So a mob assembled. Ball's father made the ritual demand that the prisoners be handed over. Following the pro forma refusal, the mob stormed the jail. First Shipp, then Smith, was dragged out, maimed, murdered, mutilated and hung in the courthouse square. The next day's headline read **MARION RELAXES AFTER LYNCHING**—like God, on the Seventh Day.

Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, declared the Marion lynching "among the most horrible and brutal in the whole history of lynching." In fact, it set no new precedents in magnitude, liturgy or cruelty. There had been many double and some triple lynchings; the most reliable estimate of the crowd (about 5,000) put it well within normal range. The antemortem maiming and postmortem mutilation were moderate; neither the victims nor their corpses were burned. Clothing, sections of rope and a sledgehammer were taken as souvenirs, but no toes, fingers or genitals were excised. A photograph was taken and distributed but was not made into a postcard. The corpses were left hanging as object lessons for the black com-

munity, but they were not dragged through the Negro section of town or set afire in front of a Negro church. Nor were the corpses allowed to hang for days; they were cut down just after dawn. As such things went, the Marion lynching was a middling affair.

The legal outcome was routine as well: The Grant County grand jury returned no indictments. The Attorney General issued warrants and brought two men to trial; Grant County petit juries found them not guilty with such dispatch that no further prosecutions were attempted. Still, the Marion lynching was unique in one respect: There was a survivor. James Cameron, 16, charged with the same offenses as Shipp and Smith, was also dragged out, beaten and befouled and made to stand beneath the other bodies. A noose was placed around his neck. Then, as Cameron recounted in his memoir, *A Time of Terror*:

A voice rose above the deafening roar of the mob. It was an echo-like voice that seemed to come from some far-away place. It was a feminine voice, sweet, clear, but unlike anything I had ever heard. It was sharp and crisp, like bells ringing out on a clear, cold, winter day: "Take this boy back."

Difficult as it may be to believe anything could halt the momentum of a mob, something did. The noose was taken from Cameron's neck. He returned to legal custody.

Given that dramatic denouement, one might expect the Marion lynching to occupy a special place in American history. It does—but for a different reason: the photograph, taken by Lawrence Beitler, a specialist in panoramic portraits. According to an interview with his daughter published half a century later, Beitler was reluctant even to go to the square, but "taking pictures was his business." Certainly he was businesslike; he spent the next ten days cranking out

copies, which he sold for 50 cents apiece.

Although never published in Marion, the photograph appeared in other regional newspapers, was picked up by the Acme News Service and was disseminated with long-lasting effect. It is believed to have inspired Abel Meeropol's 1937 poem "Bitter Fruit." Two years later that poem became the lyrics of Meeropol's "Strange Fruit," the dirge Billie Holiday made famous. In the process, however, the photograph lost its identity. Meeropol's lyrics say nothing of Indiana; the "black bodies" are "swinging in the southern breeze" from "southern trees." When, decades later, the photograph appeared in a coffee-table history, part of the caption read: "lynch law ruled the South." But one person who saw the photograph in *Alistair Cooke's America* knew its provenance: *Village Voice* columnist Cynthia Carr (*a k a* C. Carr).

Carr's knowledge was that of a native daughter. "Even as a girl," she writes in *Our Town*, "I knew there'd been a lynching in Marion, Indiana. That was my father's hometown. And on one of many trips to visit my grandparents, I heard the family story...someone called the house and spoke to my grandfather.... 'Don't walk through the courthouse square tonight on your way to work.... You might see something you don't want to see.'" Carr pondered the meaning of that message until, after her grandfather's death, his effects disgorged a shocking artifact: a Ku Klux Klan membership card. Carr, then 17, "didn't want to know more.... The news wasn't just shameful, it was frightening." She feared "someone I loved wasn't who I thought he was." When she was in her 20s she first saw Beitler's image of the black bodies hanging and the white crowd milling below "a tree I'd walked past as a child. I looked anxiously for my grandfather's face in that photo. Didn't find it. That was some relief." Then in 1993 she saw a clipping about James Cameron, who was indicted by the same grand jury that declined to indict mob members and who was convicted of accessory to manslaughter. He'd served four years, during which he began writing a memoir. After fifty years, during which he had relocated to Milwaukee, he had found a publisher.

"This," Carr writes, "was how I learned that there had been a third man.... He was living in Milwaukee. My birthplace. I seized upon these coincidences, made them a sign." Carr visited Cameron at the vacant gym he hoped to turn into a museum of the lynching era. In the course of that visit, she confessed to him her fears about her grandfather's involvement. Cameron

David Bradley, an associate professor of creative writing at the University of Oregon, is the author of *South Street and The Chaneyville Incident*, which won the PEN/Faulkner Award in 1982.

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responded by placing in her hands "a piece of fraying rope, like a thick clothesline, maybe an inch and a half long"—a relic from Marion.

Carr left that encounter "knowing that I had to write about it." Her 1994 story in the *Village Voice* drew attention nationally and internationally. But she felt compelled to do more: "I knew that I was being handed an opportunity.... I could go to Marion as a journalist and gather the facts." These facts, she writes, "would be the antidote to the cover-up, and I would gather them, following journalistic rules. Get things corroborated." Trying to do that took Carr back to the town she hadn't seen in a quarter-century.

But her goal was a broader indictment: "Beyond the mob... were thousands of witnesses like those in the infamous photograph, and beyond them were the white people at home who condoned it.... All participated in the code of silence.... I had to break the code." Trying to do that took Carr into immersion journalism, where objectivity and subjectivity sometimes merge dangerously. She spent a week in Marion in November 1994. Nine months later, she "returned... thinking I'd be there six months. I ended up staying a year."

Some readers of *Our Town* will conclude that Carr should have left after six months—or that she should not have gone back the second time. For the most coherent narrative and evocative language arose from the initial week.

"Driving north from Indianapolis through the winter stubble," Carr writes, "I crossed the Grant County line into a landscape suffused, for me, with drama and pathos. Here I had learned early on how the past weighs on people. Even so, I did not expect to find the large shadow still cast in Marion by [the lynching].... People volunteered the opinion that the lynching had poisoned the town.... I was startled myself at how the town had deteriorated. My Marion had been the ideal American small town, with rambling Victorian homes, brick streets, and church bells chiming out hymns.... The Marion I saw was... a grim godforsaken shell... a depressing strip." Although she understood that "rationally, Marion's problems had to be simply economic," she found herself "in one of those bypass motels with the wind whipping through the cracks" feeling "doubtful and daunted."

In fact, Carr did quite well that week, in terms of both traditional and immersion journalism. Though Beitler was long dead,

his daughter "impossible to track down," Carr finds that old interview and also its author, the editor of the *Marion Chronicle-Tribune*, who says, "We're still a ways away from being able to publish that picture in this newspaper." Following up a rumor, she goes to "a certain pizza parlor" to try to buy a copy of the photograph under the counter. She finds "an Asian couple behind the counter.... They'd taken over five years ago."

She visits the old Grant County jail, a "massive brick edifice" with a "feudal air not completely explained by its corner turrets." Vacated in 1981, the jail was sold for \$500 to one Rex Fansler, whose father, in 1930, identified the getaway car. Now Fansler thinks James Cameron should get money from Bill Cosby and buy the place; he's only asking \$160,000. During an eerie tour, in the course of which Carr finds "indentations left by sledgehammers," Fansler reveals, "The rope they used for the lynching came from my father's barn."

Carr's principal informant is Tom Wise, a Marion police detective and a cousin of James Cameron's. He has heard about the lynching all his life but only learned of Cameron's ordeal in the 1960s. He has tried to corroborate Cameron's story—interviewing old witnesses, reviewing old transcripts, as if it were a cold case. Convinced that even now "when whites get in their own circles... they brag about it," he tells Carr: "A veil hangs over this town."

Jack Edwards, mayor at the time of the lynching, tells her "what he had always told everyone: he left town... with no knowledge that a lynching had already been planned." But "spontaneously he then began to tell me who some of the people in the lynching photo were, though I hadn't asked about the picture and never even showed it to him. He seemed to know the photograph by heart."

Harley Burden Jr., whose father was one of Marion's two black policemen in 1930, remembers being at the home of Marion's black physician, W.T. Bailey, whose wife, Flossie, was head of both the local and state NAACP. Before the lynching, Burden heard her making phone calls, trying to get the prisoners evacuated. Afterward, Bailey drove his son and Burden to the courthouse square. Burden didn't seem to have any feelings about this, Carr reports. "The lynching hadn't been 'the worst part' as he put it. No, the worst part was what he called 'the belling' a couple of nights later.... White people drove their cars down into South Marion, dragging cans from their bumpers and shooting

guns in the air. 'I bet you every car in town was in that belling,' said Burden."

Carr's final interview that week was with 90-year-old Sarah Weaver Pate, who in 1930 was Bailey's nurse. It is a turning point, because Carr recognizes Pate's testimony as "the first emotional account of the lynching I'd heard from anyone in Marion." "So mesmerized I forgot to take notes," she crosses the hazy border between traditional and immersion journalism, compulsively confessing her grandfather's Klan membership. Interviewee turns into interviewer, as Pate asks, "Did I think a lynching could happen today?" Carr "nearly burst into tears." Told by Pate that Shipp and Smith lie buried in graves that to this day have not been marked, she visits her grandfather's cemetery and sheds the necessary tears.

One sees why Carr could not resist returning, but it almost seems as if Marion lured her back only to chew her up. At first she works doggedly at her research. If she sees a paper trail, she follows it, finding lost interviews and obscure newspaper clips. If she hears rumors of an artifact, she tracks it down, finding, through an ambush interview, a sledgehammer used to breach the jail. She even tracks down the former owner of the pizza parlor, who sells her a print of the Beitler photograph for \$6. "Do you sell a lot of these?" she asks. "On and off, yeah," the owner replies.

But sixty years take a toll. Records have been lost or discarded. Secrets have been taken to the grave. What facts remain are often contradictory, and Carr is confounded by contradiction and trapped by politically correct a prioris. When Fansler says the rape charge was bogus—as was often the case in lynchings—she writes: "I had never questioned Mary Ball's claim... I found what he was telling me incredible." Her frustration is palpable. "I tried to piece this chaotic evening into a narrative," but "the cover-up had been so total and immediate, I now had to face the reality that I would never get closure on the details." One result is an odd lacuna: Carr never presents her own reconstruction of the lynching.

In terms of immersion, Carr acquits herself well at first, turning apparent absences of data into eloquent presences. In one noninterview with a former Klansman, "Fred... paid no particular attention to me." His wife spews a line of liberal rhetoric and a sob story about how she has to take the truck keys from Fred because he has Alzheimer's and shouldn't drive, but

she can't because he's hidden them. Meanwhile, writes Carr, "the last living member of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan put his glasses on, picked up that day's *Chronicle-Tribune*, and sat there staring at it."

Eventually, however, Carr seems to become paralyzed by the absence of traditional journalistic grist and confused by her own involvement in the story. "That winter in Marion," she recalls, "I was sick a lot.... I often had the sensation that my throat was closing, that I couldn't speak.... Sometimes I would drive away from an interview in tears, and I wouldn't know why." And one day, as she tries to describe Cameron's deliverance to an informant, she "began to choke up. That moment when the noose was around his neck—I stopped, apologized." Carr calls this an "unprofessional moment." In fact, it's just immersion.

Carr knows this is where she has to go. "I wanted to feel things," she writes. "It seemed the only way to get at the problem." But it seems she can't. Eventually she forsakes both immersion and tradition for desperation journalism: She "covers" anything that holds still long enough: touchy-feely consciousness-raisers; staged reconciliations; the candidacy of a black man for sheriff; and the Ku Klux Klan.

The clearest proof of desperation is her obsession with the Klan. Admittedly, men in white hoods make good copy, but Carr writes pages on the nineteenth-century Klan, on the 1920s Indiana Klan and on the contemporary Klan, even though she knows none of them had anything to do with the Marion lynching. "Grant County was *not* a Klan hotbed any more," she writes, only to chase Klansmen over half of Indiana, like a morbidly fascinated groupie, trying to "use 'my grandfather in the Klan' to open doors." On the last night of her year she's suckered by a nut named Andy, who offers old Klan documents he doesn't have. Still, "in the years to come... I showed up at Andy's door many many times, offering money for Grant County's Klan membership list." It almost sounds like she was buying drugs.

Meanwhile, she was not covering a story she calls "proof positive that forty-three years after the lynching, the town was still racially sick": the period of racial unrest that culminated on May 14, 1973, with the shooting death of a 14-year-old black boy, Robert Johnson, allegedly by a quartet of cops. Johnson's murder, Carr writes, "reverberated all the way back to 1930." She even calls it "another lynching." The detective who investigated the crime tells her he had hard evidence, but "somehow it all

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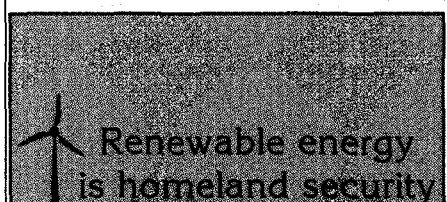


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vanished. Poof." Later, he confirms one of the names given to her by others. It sounds like she's onto a story. But on the next page Carr's back to chasing the Klan. So much for breaking the code of silence.

Nonfiction is not easy. Sometimes you get the story. Sometimes you have to let the story get you. Carr did neither, and worse, in the not-doing, she missed the likely truth about her grandfather. She writes: "He would get up at two A.M. to be at work by three." And: "My grandparents' house in Marion was the only one of my relatives' homes where I ever saw black people." So he probably slept through the lynching. He probably did not condone it. Probably, that phone call was exactly what it seemed: a warning to a man folks knew would not want to see black bodies swinging in the courthouse square on his way to work. ■

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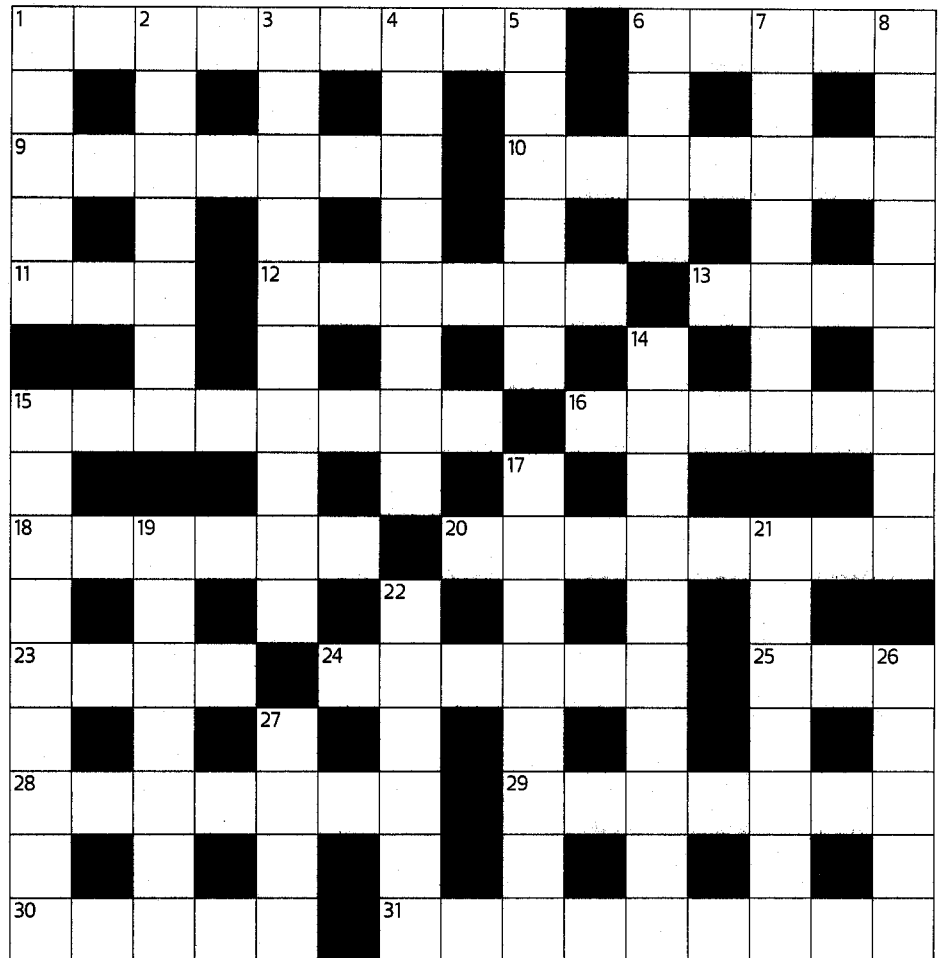
FRANK W. LEWIS

ACROSS

- 1 and 6 A writer's worst nightmare is right to throw out 10 to a point that falls flat. (9,5)
- 9 Get something like a Sousaphone and ram this. Little one spelled defeat for the cavalry. (7)
- 10 It may be heavy at 5 PM, but it proves a broken raft to start fiction. (7)
- 11, 13 and 27 down Obviously they have the moolah and don't have to work. (3,4,4)
- 12 Junior may have had it all geared up, but it sounds like what came out of the plutonium pile. (3,3)
- 13 See 11
- 15 It involves money on the barrel, as they say—enough for each lass. (4,4)
- 16 Do you have a sugar-licking taste to hold it—and eat it? (6)
- 18 Get at, forward and backward, in this. (6)
- 20 Barely moving, being late and not too bright. (4,4)
- 23, 24 and 25 What you have to do periodically with those calendars that have 365 pages, if you want a rest. (4,3,3,3)
- 28 You don't get down with dated music, obviously, but you might like to see business on it. (7)
- 29 Taken by the green-eyed monster? (7)
- 30 Point to a bad chop—but it takes a lot of time. (5)
- 31 Made yourself comfortable at the old city, but on the wrong date—and got all wet! (9)

DOWN

- 1 Take things the wrong way to bring it up, but one has no feelings! (5)
- 2 They supply small drinks to those who dance the old-fashioned way—so watch out! (7)
- 3 Thrombosis! The man takes a turn with that thing that might hold your pants in line. (10)
- 4 Naturally a place to stay at a town in Nevada. (8)



- 6 and 5 Deer country? Nothing much happens with it. (10)
- 7 One doesn't believe it is fashionable with a Cuban leader. (7)
- 8 You might see one wandering around the city in India, but many of us have one here, if we get bossy on a high level. (6,3)
- 14 How the Pinafore's captain was sick at sea. (6,4)
- 15 She can belt things out, and takes tea in London with possible net results getting some workout. (9)
- 17 Look to pass away on the little street, being the most scruffy! (8)
- 19 Has an affinity for chopped steak, to the very end. (5,2)
- 21 Watch it! One might be in the crow's nest! (4,3)
- 22 How the lisper complains about his lower limbs—or the magnitude thereof. (6)

- 26 The electric circuit closer probably is all stuck together. (5)
- 27 See 11 across

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3037

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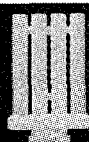
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